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Virtues as potential instruments to enhance bridging social capital

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CHAPTER 1
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Due to immigration and globalization, Western European societies have become more culturally and religiously diverse throughout the last decades. The increased number of immigrants from Islamic countries has made the Islam in particular a fast-growing religion in Western Europe. This 'new' and vital religion is regularly perceived as a threat to Western European culture (e.g., Croucher, 2013; González, Verkuyten, Weesie & Poppe, 2008). One of the reasons for this perceived threat is that some of the norms, values and beliefs of the Islam are seen as incompatible with the Western European way of life. In the Integrated Threat Theory (ITT, Stephan & Stephan, 1996, 2000; Stephan, Ybarra, Martinez, Schwarzwald & Tur-Kaspa, 1998), this kind of threat is referred to as symbolic threat. Symbolic threat results from the feeling that the world view of the ingroup, which is believed to be morally right, is undermined by a specific outgroup. Symbolic threat appears to have negative consequences for the attitudes towards members of that specific outgroup (e.g., González et al., 2008; Riek, Mania & Gaertner, 2006; Stephan, Renfro, Esses, Stephan & Martin, 2005; Stephan et al., 1998) and, in this way, for intergroup relations within a society.

Because religion plays a major role with regard to the perceived differences between Muslims and non-Muslims in Western Europe, it seems worthwhile to investigate whether a concept that is related to religion may be helpful in order to improve the relations between these groups. Religion emphasizes morality and offers people guidelines and motivations for moral conduct (e.g., Rossano, 2008; Vitell et al., 2009; Walker & Pitts, 1998). More specifically, religion emphasizes virtues worth pursuing. The virtues that are emphasized by religions may go beyond specific religious traditions and may apply to secularists as well. Indeed, six core virtues recur in the central writings of eight important philosophical and religious traditions around the world, namely Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Athenian philosophy, Judaism, Christianity and Islam (Dahlsgaard, Peterson & Seligman, 2005). This suggests that these six virtues are valued across different philosophical and religious traditions.

The question is whether virtues are a useful concept in improving relations between different cultural and/or religious groups, in particular between Muslims and non-Muslims in Western Europe. This is the central focus of this dissertation. Below, we[1] describe in more detail what the concept of virtues entails and why we think virtues can contribute to positive intergroup relations. Furthermore, we discuss the conditions we regard as necessary for virtues to be a useful concept in improving intergroup relations and how these conditions are researched in this dissertation.

1 *Throughout this dissertation 'we' is used instead of 'I', because the research described is the product of collaborative effort.*

The concept of virtues

Virtue ethics answer the question 'what kind of person ought I to be' or 'what sort of person should I become' (Cawley, Johnson & Martin, 2000; Lapsley & Lasky, 2001). In philosophy, Plato's (427-347 BC) categorization of virtues is among the most influential ones (cf. Dahlsgaard, Peterson & Seligman, 2005; Van Tongeren, 2003). Plato identified four core virtues, courage, justice, temperance and wisdom, which he believed encompassed all virtues. Everything that is 'good' should be in line with these four core virtues. Plato's disciple Aristotle (384-322 BC), who is generally regarded as the founder of virtue ethics, elaborates further on the nature of virtues and how to live a virtuous live in his book *Nicomachean Ethics* (cf. Pakaluk, 2005; Van Tongeren, 2003). According to Aristotle, a virtue is "a trait that contributes to someone's being a good human being" (cf. Pakaluk, 2005, p. 87), and this trait can be acquired by practice. He makes a division between rational or thinking-related virtues, enabling people to know what *is* 'good' (e.g., wisdom), and virtues of character, enabling people to actually *do* 'good' (e.g., courage). Character virtues form the golden mean between two extremes. The virtue courage, for example, forms the golden mean between cowardice and audacity.

In psychology, there is a long tradition of research on ethical and moral principles, especially with respect to human development (e.g., Bandura, 1969; Erikson, 1964; Kohlberg, 1963/2008; Piaget, 1972/1932). Recently, there has been an increased interest in moral principles (e.g., Lapsley & Lasky, 2001; Smith, Smith & Christopher, 2007; Walker & Pitts, 1998), their relation with attitudes and behavior towards others (e.g., Aquino & Reed, 2002; Hardy, 2006; Reed & Aquino, 2003; Schwartz, 2007), and particularly in virtues (e.g., Cawley, et al., 2000; Dahlsgaard, et al., 2005; De Raad & Van Oudenhoven, 2011; Haslam, Bain & Neal, 2004; McCullough & Snyder, 2000; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Shryack, Steger, Krueger & Kallie, 2010). McCullough and Snyder (2000) define a virtue as "any psychological process that consistently enables a person to think and act as to yield benefits to himself or herself and society" (p.1). Peterson and Seligman (2004) regard virtues as universal core characteristics and consider strengths as the distinguishable routes to displaying these core characteristics. Strengths are defined as trait-like tendencies that are morally valued in their own right, and that contribute to living a good life for oneself and for others. De Raad and Van Oudenhoven (2011) define a virtue as "a morally good trait" (p. 44).

Inspired by these philosophers and psychologists, we define a virtue as *a morally good trait that can be acquired and developed*. Morally good indicates that the trait motivates a person to act in a way that promotes a good life for himself or herself and for others. It should be mentioned that morally good is not the same as altruism (see also Van Tongeren, 2003). A virtue can be a motivation to do something that yields benefits for others, but also to take good care of oneself. At

the same time, because of the social nature of human beings, taking good care of oneself generally requires good relations with others, and, therefore, concern for others. Furthermore, this definition stresses that virtues are not innate, but, just as Aristotle stated (384-322 BC) can be acquired by practice (cf. Pakaluk, 2005; Van Tongeren, 2003).

Religion offers guidelines with regard to the virtues worth pursuing. However, one does not have to be religious in order to pursue specific virtues or to be virtuous. Since virtues are embedded in a cultural context (Sandage & Hill, 2001; Stewart-Sicking, 2008), the social groups a person belongs to may influence the virtues he or she regards as worth pursuing. This social group can be a religious as well as a secular one. Religion in particular, however, may have an impact on the pursuit of virtues, since religion explicitly emphasizes moral principles and offers guidelines and rituals for practicing these principles (Rossano, 2008; Vitell et al., 2009).

Although virtues resemble values (Haslam, et al., 2004), these concepts are not synonymous. Rather, virtues may be regarded as a subset of values, namely moral values that can be expressed in individual behavior. Schwartz (1992) defines values as trans-situational goals that serve as guiding principles in the life of an individual or a group. These guiding principles can refer to morally good traits, but not necessarily so. For example, the values wealth and national security that Schwartz distinguishes may be positive for a society and individuals within that society, but they do not indicate how an individual should behave morally.

Why may virtues improve intergroup relations?

In our opinion, virtues could be a useful concept to improve social relations within a society, that is, to strengthen social capital (Putnam, 2007). Putnam distinguishes between bonding social capital, which refers to connections between people within the same group, and bridging social capital, which refers to connections between people across different groups. According to Putnam, a society's bonding as well as bridging social capital is negatively affected by increased ethnic diversity. Nevertheless, enhancing bridging social capital may be particularly important in a culturally and religiously diverse society. This kind of social capital connects people from different groups, whereas bonding social capital can result in the isolation of one group from other groups in society (Koonce, 2011). Moreover, a perceived threat due to the presence of another cultural and/or religious group within a society seems to challenge bridging social capital in particular, because this negatively affects the attitudes towards members of that specific outgroup (e.g., González et al., 2008; Riek, et al., 2006; Stephan, et al., 2005; Stephan et al., 1998).

We think that virtues can positively contribute to both bonding and bridging social capital, because virtues refer to traits that yield benefits to oneself and to

others. Consequently, they can promote behavior that contributes to positive relationships with others. For virtues to be useful to enhance bridging social capital, members of the different groups should agree on the importance of expressing the virtues. Indeed, certain virtues appear to be shared across different cultural and religious traditions, both across nations (Dahlsgaard, et al., 2005; Park, Peterson & Seligman, 2006; Smith, et al., 2007), and within the same nation (Van Oudenhoven, de Raad, Carmona, Helbig & Van der Linden, 2012). Especially virtues explicitly referring to doing what is right in relation to others, such as for example kindness, respect and fairness, appear to be highly valued across traditions. These virtues in particular may promote behavior that positively contributes to bonding and bridging social capital.

Previous empirical studies did in fact indicate that virtues promote behavior that contributes to positive relationships with others, especially those virtues that explicitly refer to doing what is right in relation to others. Hardy (2006), for example, found a positive relation between the importance of four pro-social virtues (consideration, kindness, sympathy and generosity) to a person's identity and self-reported levels of different kinds of pro-social behavior. In line with these findings, Aquino and Reed (2002) found that the importance of a set of nine virtues to a person's identity was positively related to self-reported volunteerism and actual donation behavior. Most of these nine virtues referred to doing what is right in relation to others, such as kindness and fairness. Aquino and Reed call the importance of virtues to a person's identity 'moral identity centrality'. They argue that a subset of nine virtues can be used to measure this moral identity centrality, since these virtues will activate other virtues that form part of a person's unique moral identity. This would imply that the general importance of virtues to a person's identity would promote pro-social behavior.

Reed and Aquino (2003) conducted another study in which they specifically focused on the relation between moral identity centrality and pro-social behavior in relation to outgroup members. Moral identity centrality appeared to be related to more willingness to help, and less likeliness to harm outgroup members. Reed and Aquino explained this finding with the idea that people with a central moral identity may include a larger number of social groups in their ingroup: A moral identity may highlight "…that in some simple, perfectly impenetrable way, we are all brothers." (p. 1284). This finding supports the usefulness of virtues as instruments to strengthen bridging social capital.

Alike virtues, similarities have been established in values regarded as important across cultures and religions (e.g., Fischer & Schwartz, 2011; Saroglou, Delpierre & Dernelle, 2004; Saroglou & Galand, 2004; Schwartz & Bardi, 2001). Moreover, positive relations have been found between the importance attached to certain values and individual attitudes and intentions that can positively contribute to bridging social capital (e.g., Sagiv & Schwartz, 1995; Saroglou, Lamkaddem,

Van Pachterbeke & Buxant, 2009; Schiefer, Möllering, Daniel, Benish-Wesiman, & Boehnke, 2010). Therefore, the question may arise why we would focus on virtues instead of values. In our opinion, the impact of virtues on individual attitudes and behavior is more straightforward than that of values, because people are individually accountable for displaying specific virtues, and this does not hold for all values. As a consequence, virtues seem to be a more useful concept than values for interventions that are aimed at enhancing bridging social capital.

Virtues also seem to be useful a concept for interventions, because they can be acquired (Aristotle, 384-322 BC. cf. Pakaluk, 2005; Van Tongeren, 2003). As a consequence, individuals can be encouraged to develop and express specific virtues. Virtues could, for example, be stressed in governmental campaigns and promoted within (culturally diverse) school classes and organizations as guidelines for how to treat each other. An example of an international organization already promoting the practice of virtues is the Virtues Project (www.virtuesproject.nl), providing books, programs and materials for the use of virtues in educational, work, and community programs.

Under which conditions can virtues improve intergroup relations?

For virtues to be a useful concept in enhancing bridging social capital, we argue that several conditions should be met. First, the virtues should be regarded as relevant by the members of the different groups concerned. Otherwise, these members will neither be motivated to adopt the virtues into their own behavior, nor appreciate the virtues being shown by outgroup members. Second, the members of the different groups should interpret the virtues in a way that encourages behavior that positively contributes to bridging social capital. Third, members of the different groups should agree to a large extent on the interpretations of these virtues. According to Rossano (2008), members from different religious and/or cultural groups may share the same moral principles, but their interpretation and hence application of these principles may differ. If the interpretations of specific virtues differed drastically across groups, or were contradictory even, those virtues could not be used directly as a basis for improving their relationships to one another. A fourth condition is that the virtues do indeed promote positive attitudes and behavior towards outgroup members. A virtue may be interpreted in a way that encourages doing what is right in relation to others, but if this behavior is not displayed, or only displayed towards members of the ingroup, its potentially positive contribution to bridging social capital will be absent. These four conditions are explored in this dissertation.

The present research

During the last four decades, the number of Muslims in the Netherlands has rapidly grown from almost 0% to approximately 5% of the Dutch population (Statistics Netherlands, 2009a). Research showed that two-thirds of the Dutch population is worried about the influence of the Islam on Dutch society (Lampert, 2013). Furthermore, about 50% of Dutch adolescents is found to have negative feelings towards Muslims (González et al, 2008; Van der Noll, Poppe & Verkuyten, 2010). Reasons for these negative feelings are that they regard the norms, beliefs and values of Muslims as a threat to Dutch culture, that they characterize Muslims as violent, dishonest, and arrogant, and that they feel threatened with regard to their safety due to the presence of Muslims. Compared to other Western European countries, the levels of anti-Muslim attitudes displayed in the Netherlands appeared to be relatively high (Savelkoul, Scheepers, Van der Veld & Hagendoorn, 2012). Therefore, the Netherlands seem a good test case for exploring the potentially positive contribution of virtues to bridging social capital within culturally and religiously diverse Western European societies. The studies described in this dissertation focus on the relations between Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch (mainly Christians and secular people). These studies intend to answer the following research questions:

1. Which virtues are relevant to Dutch citizens, both Muslims and non-Muslims?
We aimed to find a set of virtues that are central in the daily lives of people in contemporary Dutch society. Therefore, we asked people with different religious and secular backgrounds to list the virtues they regarded as important. These virtues are subsequently categorized into a manageable number of overarching virtue types.

2. How are virtues interpreted by Dutch citizens?
To get a comprehensive insight into virtue interpretations among Dutch citizens, we performed a qualitative study. Dutch citizens with different religious and secular backgrounds were interviewed about their interpretations of the virtues found as relevant to Dutch citizens. We were especially interested in finding out which virtues are interpreted in a way that refers to doing what is right in relation to others, including outgroup members, since these virtues in particular are expected to positively contribute to bridging social capital.

3. To what extent do Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch agree on the virtues they pursue?
In order to find out whether Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch pursue similar virtues, we asked members of both groups to rank the virtues based on the degree to which they pursued to possess these virtues. Virtues strongly pursued by both groups can

be useful in improving their relationships to one another, because members of both groups will be motivated to express these virtues in their behavior and will probably appreciate it when others display these virtues towards them.

4. To what degree do Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch agree on their virtue interpretations?
To answer this question, Muslim and non- Muslim Dutch were asked to which extent they agreed with a set of different interpretations of the virtues. Virtues interpreted in a way that refers to doing what is right in relation to others, including outgroup members, across both groups may be functional to positively influence the relationships between the two groups.

5. Is pursuing certain virtues and agreeing with specific virtue interpretations indeed related to attitudes and intentions that will help to enhance bridging social capital?
We take some first steps to explore these relations in the current research by investigating the relations among non-Muslim Dutch between pursuing the virtues, extent of agreement with several interpretations of the virtues, and positive attitudes and intentions towards Muslim Dutch.

Below, an overview is given of the content of the chapters of this dissertation in which these five research questions are addressed.

Chapter 2. This chapter examines which virtues are considered to be relevant by Dutch citizens. For this purpose, two groups of persons with a moral task in society, namely school teachers (n = 85) and municipal council members (n = 213), were asked which virtues (personal characteristics) they propagate. To find out which virtues are regarded as important among the younger generation without an explicitly moral task, a group of secondary school pupils (n = 307) was also asked which virtues they regarded as important. Each of the three groups of respondents included representatives of the four major (non-)religious groups in the Netherlands; secularists (44% of the Dutch population), Catholics (27%), Protestants (17%), and Muslims (5%) (Statistics Netherlands, 2009a, 2009b). The answers of the school teachers, municipal council members, and pupils are categorized into a manageable number of overarching virtue types relevant to contemporary Dutch society. Furthermore, we explore the relation between respondents' religious or secular background and the frequencies in which they mention these virtue types, in order to identify which virtue types are shared across the religious and secular groups, and which are unique to a specific group.

In the subsequent studies, we only used the labels of the virtue types found in this chapter instead of the whole category of virtues. We use the term virtues instead of virtue types when we refer to these labels.

Chapter 3. The ways Dutch citizens interpret the virtues mentioned in Chapter 2 are considered in the third chapter. In order to achieve a comprehensive insight, a qualitative approach is used. Members of the four major religious and non-religious groups in the Netherlands were interviewed, as well as members of an upcoming group that regard themselves as religious but not as belonging to a traditional religious group (Kronjee & Lampert, 2006). In these interviews, the respondents (n = 23) were asked about their interpretations of the virtues, how they think these virtues can be expressed in behavior, and when they consider it as important to display the virtues. The degree to which the virtues refer to doing what is right in relation to others, including outgroup members, is investigated in order to identify those virtues that seem particularly useful in enhancing bridging capital. Besides, we explore indications for associations between religious background and the way the respondents interpret the virtues.

Chapter 4. This chapter describes a questionnaire research investigating the degree to which Muslim Dutch (n = 55) and non-Muslim Dutch (n = 380) pursue similar virtues (part 1). In addition, we investigate the extent to which pursuing certain virtues by non-Muslim Dutch is related to attitudes of acceptance towards the participation of Muslims in Dutch society (part 2). In part 2, the potential role of perceived symbolic threat due to the presence of Muslims is examined as well. We hypothesize that the pursuit of virtues that refer to the equality of all people and concern for others may reduce levels of perceived symbolic threat due to the presence of Muslims, and, accordingly, result in greater acceptance towards the participation of Muslims in Dutch society.

Chapter 5. The fifth chapter focuses on the role of virtue interpretations with regard to the potential of virtues to positively influence bridging social capital. The study is a questionnaire research that consists of two parts. In part 1, the way Muslims (n = 46) and non-Muslims (n = 284) interpret a given set of virtues and the degree to which they agree on their interpretations is examined. In part 2, we investigate the relations between the degree to which non-Muslims' pursue a specific virtue, their degree of agreement with a set of different interpretations of this virtue, and their intentions to act in a non-condemning way towards Muslims with a different viewpoint. We expect non-condemning intentions to enhance bridging social capital.

Chapter 6. In this final chapter, the main findings of the studies in this dissertation are summarized and related to the existing literature on virtues and intergroup relations. Moreover, some practical implications of these findings are described with regard to the usefulness of virtues as a concept to improve relations between different cultural and religious groups within a society, especially between Muslims and non-Muslims in the Netherlands.

CHAPTER 2
VIRTUES RELEVANT TO MUSLIM AND NON-MUSLIM DUTCH

Western European societies have become more culturally and religiously diverse during the last decades. Increased diversity can be challenging for social capital within a society, as is illustrated by the perceived threat due to the presence of Muslims among non-Muslims within Western Europe (e.g., Croucher, 2013; González, Verkuyten, Weesie & Poppe, 2008). A perceived threat by a specific group has negative consequences for the attitudes towards members of that group (e.g., González et al., 2008; Riek, Mania & Gaertner, 2006; Stephan, Renfro, Esses, Stephan & Martin, 2005; Stephan, Ybarra, Martinez, Schwarzwald & Tur-Kaspa, 1998), and, consequently, for intergroup relations within a society. Therefore, it seems important to find out how to improve intergroup relations in contemporary Western European societies, or, in other words, how to enhance bridging social capital. We hypothesize that virtues, defined as morally good traits that can be acquired and developed, may offer a positive contribution.

For virtues to be useful instruments to strengthen bridging social capital, it is a prerequisite that they are regarded as relevant by the members of the different groups concerned. The purpose of the present study is to investigate which virtues play a central role in the daily lives of people with different religious and secular backgrounds in the Netherlands; a typical culturally and religiously diverse Western European society. We are specifically interested in the virtues that are central to the lives of Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch and the degree to which these virtues correspond with each other. In this way, we aim to explore whether virtues could be a useful concept to improve the relations between these two groups. First, we will discuss previous studies that focused on virtues important within and across societies and explain what our study adds to this previous research.

Previous research on virtues that are important within and across different cultures

Previous studies that investigated the virtues endorsed by people within and across different cultures used different approaches to measure these virtues. A first approach that is being used is to ask respondents to rate a limited set of virtues. This approach is taken in the Values In Action inventory (VIA) (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The VIA measures character strengths that express the six core virtues that are primarily identified by Dahlsgaard, Peterson and Seligman (2005) analyses of the central writings of eight important philosophical and religious traditions around the world. Thus, the VIA indirectly measures the degree to which a person subscribes to the six core virtues. Research conducted with the VIA, both within and across different cultures, showed convergence in the strengths endorsed across nations. This holds especially with regard to kindness, fairness and honesty, which belong to the core virtues of humanity, justice and courage, respectively (Park, Peterson & Seligman, 2006). Another study that started from a given set of virtues

is the study of Van Oudenhoven, De Raad, Carmona, Helbig and Van der Linden (2012). In this study, the importance that was attached to virtues by Muslims and non-Muslims in the Netherlands, as well as by Spanish and German participants was measured. The 15 virtues used by Van Oudenhoven et al. (2012) were based on a list of virtues regarded as important by Dutch spiritual leaders. Of these 15 virtues, virtues that explicitly referred to doing what is right in relation to others in particular, such as respect, love and helpfulness, were rated as highly important among Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch, as well as among Germans and Spaniards. Both the studies of Van Oudenhoven et al. (2012) and Park et al. (2006) provide valuable insight into the comparative importance of virtues to different groups within and across nations. However, because these studies used a fixed set of virtues, certain virtues that were also relevant to the participants' daily lives might be missing from these studies.

A second approach, which stems from personality psychology, is the psycholexical approach. This approach has been used to deduce a list of virtues representative to a certain country (Cawley, Martin & Johnson, 2000; De Raad & Van Oudenhoven, 2011). In this approach, the lexicon is examined for terms referring to virtues. This provides an exhaustive list of virtues that appear in written language. Subsequently, participants can be asked to the degree to which these virtues play a central role in their daily lives. A disadvantage of this approach is that the list of virtues used may affect participants' answers. For example, as virtues refer to morally good character traits, participants may have the tendency to rate all virtues as highly relevant because of social desirability.

A third approach is to use free listing procedures. In these procedures, people write down the virtues that are highly accessible to them, therefore making it a suitable approach to investigate the virtues relevant to people's daily lives. Walker and Pitts (1998) used a free listing procedure to investigate which features Canadian participants regarded as typical of a highly moral person. Based on the results of a similarity sorting, the features (i.e., virtues) found in their study could be grouped into six clusters. These six clusters were: principled-idealistic, dependable-loyal, having integrity, caring-trustworthy, fair, and confident. Smith, Smith and Christopher (2007) used a free listing procedure to study whether the features people ascribe to a good person differ across cultures. They asked participants from Guam, Philippines, Palau, Taiwan, Turkey, the US and Venezuela to list the features of a good person. They found that frequently mentioned features (i.e., virtues) across all cultures belong to the caring-trustworthy cluster (see Walker and Pitts, 1998), which comprises honesty, kindness and helpfulness. This indicates that these virtues are relevant to the daily lives of lay people across different cultures.

The aim of the present research

The present research consists of two studies. The aim of study 1 was to obtain an exhaustive list of virtues relevant to different groups within contemporary Dutch society. A free listing procedure was used in which respondents were asked to list the virtues they regarded as important. Respondents belonged to the major religious and non-religious groups in the Netherlands, i.e., secularists (44% of the Dutch population), Catholics (27%), Protestants (17%), and Muslims (5%) (Statistics Netherlands, 2009a, 2009b). The aim of study 2 was to cluster the virtues found in study 1 into a manageable number of overarching types of virtues. To do so, we used an approach similar to those used in previous studies (Haslam, Bain & Neal, 2004; Walker & Pitts, 1998). We first asked respondents with a good mastery of the Dutch language to perform a similarity sorting task to categorize the virtues found in study 1. Subsequently, we used a hierarchical cluster analysis and a multiple correspondence analysis on these categorization data to reveal which clusters and dimensions could be identified within these categorizations. Based on the results of these two different analyses, we came to a solid-based grouping of the virtues into a set of overarching virtue types. Afterwards, we analyzed the similarities and differences between the virtues relevant to the different religious and secular groups from study 1, by comparing the frequencies in which these virtue types had been mentioned within each group.

Study 1: Virtues relevant to Dutch citizens

For study 1, we used data collected among primary and secondary school teachers, municipal council members, and secondary school pupils. These data are parts of a larger study conducted by the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom relations, which had been collected between 2006 and 2009. School teachers and municipal council members were chosen deliberately for this research, since they have a moral task in society. School teachers are expected to think about the virtues they regard as important in the socialization of their pupils, and council members are expected to think about the virtues they regard as important within their municipality. Secondary school pupils were included in order to find out which virtues are regarded as important among respondents without an explicitly moral task. Moreover, apart from being younger, secondary school pupils form an interesting group because there is a great variation within this group with respect to social-economical background and level of education, which may result in a more representative inventory of virtues than when examining a homogeneous group. We asked the members of these three groups to list the virtues and personal characteristics they regarded as important. We used the both terms, because not all

respondents may know the meaning of the term virtue. The secondary school pupils were solely asked to list important personal characteristics.

Method

Participants

School teachers. A group of 85 school teachers participated, 35 males and 50 females with a mean age of 44 years (range 23-60, *SD* = 11.05). Of the teachers, 20 indicated they were non-religious, 21 indicated they were Protestant, 17 Catholic, 17 Muslim, 7 Hindu, and 3 Jewish. The teachers were recruited via schools. One secondary school was approached via personal channels and the others were primary schools selected via the database of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, ensuring that we achieved a proper spread within the sample in terms of religious and secular background and geography. Of the teachers, 38 came from the western part of the Netherlands, 18 teachers from the eastern part, 15 from the northern part, 7 from the central part, and 4 teachers came from the southern part of the Netherlands. Three teachers did not fill in their place of residence.

Municipal council members. A group of 213 municipal council members participated, of whom 129 were males and 82 were females. Two council members did not indicate their gender. Their mean age was 47 years (range 18-69, *SD* = 11.56). Of the council members, 85 indicated they were non-religious, 52 indicated they were Protestant, 41 Catholic, 14 Muslim, and 21 council members did not indicate their religious background. The municipal council members were selected via the internet based on their different political and geographical backgrounds to ensure a representative sample. They were contacted by e-mail or telephone. Data collection took place in two periods. The first subsample (n = 194) was recruited just after the municipal council elections. The response rate in this first round was approximately 80%. An additional group of 19 council members was recruited a year later, to get a more equal distribution across the different political parties. The response rate in this second round was approximately 50%. In the final sample, 74 council members represented the social-democrats (PvdA), 43 the Christian-democrats (CDA), 23 the green party (Groenlinks), 20 the conservative liberals (VVD), 19 the orthodox Christian-democrats (CU), 18 the socialist party (SP), 6 the left-wing liberals (D66), and one member represented the fundamental Christians (SGP). The other municipal council members (n = 9) represented local parties. With regard to geographical spreading, 58 council members came from the northern part of the Netherlands, 48 from the western part, 48 from the eastern part, 39 from the southern part, and 19 came from the central part of the Netherlands.

Secondary school pupils. A group of 307 secondary school pupils participated in this study, of whom 178 were girls and 126 were boys. Three pupils did not fill in their gender. Their mean age was 15 years (range 12-18, *SD* = 1.02). Of the pupils, 141 indicated they were non-religious, 72 indicated they were Muslim, 46 Protestant, 39 Catholic, and 9 pupils did not indicate their religious background. The pupils were recruited via schools with different religious or secular backgrounds. These schools were found by an internet search as well as personal channels, and selected on the basis of their religious or secular background and geographical spreading. Of the secondary school pupils, 114 came from the highest level of education (denoted as pre-university education in the Netherlands), 95 from the middle level (school of higher general secondary education), 48 from the lower level (lower vocational education), and 33 pupils from the lowest level (practical education). With regard to geographical spreading, 101 pupils came from the eastern part of the Netherlands, 92 from the southern part, 57 from the western part, and 55 came from the northern part of the Netherlands.

Measures and procedure. First, respondents were asked to answer a series of questions on their gender, age, country of birth, and religion. Second, the questions crucial for the present study were asked, related to which virtues respondents regarded as important.

The teachers received and returned the questionnaires via their school. The questions relevant for this study were: 'Which personal characteristics do you try to transfer to your pupils?', and 'Which virtues do you try to transfer to your pupils?. The council members received and returned their questionnaires via e-mail. The two questions relevant for this study were similar to those for the teachers, except that 'pupils' was replaced by 'community members'. The teachers and council members were asked to mention as many characteristics and virtues as they thought relevant. Both teachers and council members gave highly overlapping answers to the two questions, so they were analyzed together. The pupils had to fill in the questionnaires during class. The question relevant for this study was: 'Which personal characteristics do you regard to be important and do you try to embed in your daily life?' They, too, were free to mention as many characteristics as they thought to be relevant.

Results

Of the 605 respondents (teachers, council members, and pupils taken together), 549 respondents (91%) provided answers to the questions relevant for the present study. This group provided 1,231 different answers in total. We considered an answer as a virtue if (1) it referred to a morally good trait, and (2) it referred to a trait that could be acquired and developed. 'Morally good' indicates that the trait

motivates behavior that yields benefits to others and/or to oneself without doing so at the expense of others. Examples of answers not meeting the two criteria are 'tallness', since this is not a morally good trait; 'democracy', because this is not a trait; and 'musicality', since this trait is innate rather than acquired. In case of doubt, we included the trait that was mentioned because we wanted to obtain an exhaustive list of virtues. This process yielded 348 examples of virtues. Next, we combined responses with an identical or almost identical meaning, for example, *friendliness* and *kindness*, and *honesty* and *truthfulness*. This resulted in a list of 80 virtues (see Table 1). Especially virtues with a strong social character, such as *respect*, *honesty, kindness*, *helpfulness*, *tolerance*, *openness*, *engagement*, and *love*, were frequently mentioned by teachers, council members, and pupils alike.

Study 2: Clustering of the virtues in overarching virtue types

The purpose of the second study was to cluster the 80 virtues that had been identified in study 1 into a manageable number of overarching types of virtues. In addition, we explored whether there are shared virtues among Muslim, Christian (Catholics and Protestants) and secular Dutch, based on the frequencies in which these overarching virtue types were mentioned within those groups.

Method

Participants. Fifty-five adults, 23 males and 32 females, participated in study 2. All participants were between the 18 and 65 years of age, had been raised in the Netherlands, and were university students or graduates. The participants were recruited among colleagues, acquaintances and students of the researchers. We wanted to select participants with a good mastery of the Dutch language, who would be able to recognize subtle distinctions between the virtues.

Procedure. The participants were asked to individually perform a similarity sorting task, that is, to categorize the 80 virtues in a card-sorting task. Each participant was asked to group the virtues into any number of categories based on their meaning. Cards that were placed together in the same category were marked, and then returned to the researchers.

Data analysis. The number of categories chosen varied between 4 and 50, with a mean of 16 categories (SD = 9.47). The mean number of virtues that participants put into a single category was 7 (SD = 5.03). We performed a hierarchical cluster analysis (HCA) and a multiple correspondence analysis (MCA)

to identify the clusters and dimensions on which the categorizations had been made, in order to find a proper way of grouping the 80 virtues. To determine the virtue types, we combined the results of the HCA and the MCA. In addition, we considered the semantic meaning of the virtues, and required a minimal frequency of the virtues mentioned in study 1 in order to arrive at a set of virtue types relevant to contemporary Dutch society (the virtues together in a virtue type had to be mentioned by more than 1% of all respondents). The labels of the virtue types were based on the virtue within the type that was mentioned most frequently. In this way, it could be ascertained that these labels are relevant to people in contemporary Dutch society. First, we will briefly explain the HCA and the MCA, and following that, the results are presented.

Hierarchical Cluster Analysis. HCA is a descriptive technique grouping together observations (in this case virtues) that are similar to each other based on a set of variables (in this case, the categorizations of the participants) (Everitt, Landau, & Leese, 2001; Mirzaei, Rahmati, & Ahmadi, 2008). In this study, the clustering was based on the distances between each pair of virtues. As a distance measure, we used one minus the proportion-of-agreement among the participants, where the latter was computed as the number of participants putting a pair of virtues into the same category, divided by the total number of participants. Analyses were performed using MatLab (version R2010a for Windows, 2010).

We chose to perform an HCA because we were interested in the structure of overarching virtue types. With an HCA, the hierarchical relations among the virtues are shown. We used agglomerative (bottom-up) hierarchical clustering, which means that each observation (virtue) starts within its own cluster, then the nearest clusters are combined with each other, and this process continues until all clusters merge into one overarching cluster (Everitt, et al., 2001; Mirzaei, et al., 2008). The output of the HCA is represented in a dendrogram which visually presents information concerning the hierarchical relations among the virtues (see Figure 1). The nodes of the dendrogram represent the clusters, and the height of the vertical lines provides information about the strength of the clustering. In this case, the greater the height indicates the weaker the association between two clusters. We had no preconception of the final number of clusters we would obtain. HCA does not require the number of clusters to be specified before conducting the analysis. Since goodness of fit (i.e., how well the data fit the model) indices are lacking, the researcher determines the number of clusters he or she wants to obtain and the dendrogram represents information about the structure of this clustering. Based on this information, the researcher decides the final number of clusters.

Multiple Correspondence Analysis. MCA is a multivariate statistical method for exploring relationships in large data sets (Greenacre & Pardo, 2006). The

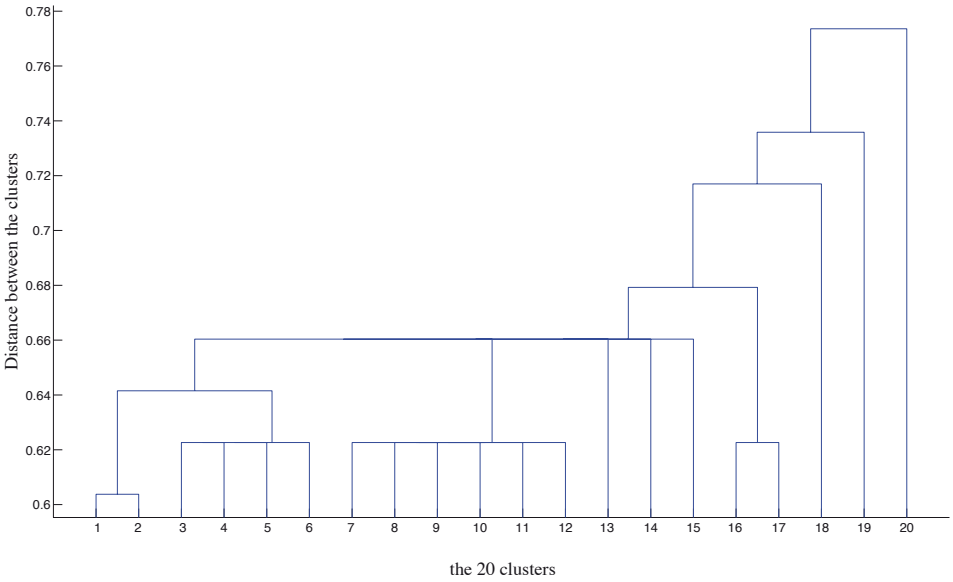
relationships between the nominal variables are visualized in a spatial map, allowing an interpretation of their associations. Analyses were performed using SPSS (IBM SPSS Statistics version 20, 2011), and visual representations were obtained with MatLab (version R2010a for Windows, 2010).

We chose to perform a MCA because it provides a direct method for representing the relationships between the virtue categorizations by the different participants, and, in doing so, an insight into the general relationships across the virtues. In this study, a data matrix was constructed, with the categorized virtues represented on the horizontal axis (80), and the participants represented on the vertical axis (55). For each participant, virtues put together into one category received the same number. The MCA was performed on these data. In this way, each virtue is depicted in a 55-dimensional space, based on the similarities in categorization among the participants (see Van der Heijden, Teunissen, & Van Orlé, 1997, for a detailed explanation of this procedure). The closer the virtues in this space are to each other, and the further they are away from the origin (0,0), the stronger the relationships between the virtues. A stronger relationship means that the virtues were put together into one category by the participants more often. Following this analysis, a representation in a subspace with fewer dimensions that fits the points of the multi-dimensional space as closely as possible is sought, in order to explain most of the variance across the categorizations of the participants (Greenacre & Pardo, 2006). We chose for a two-dimensional subspace in order to project the virtues onto a plane that allows for easy visualization and interpretation, after verifying that this solution fitted the data to a reasonable extent.

Results

Results of the HCA. We chose to obtain 20 clusters in the HCA, since this is a manageable number for comparing the virtues mentioned across the different religious and secular groups. Moreover, as this number is a little above the mean number of categories (16) that the respondents came up with, the risk of missing out important clusters is decreased. The results of the HCA are shown in the dendrogram in Figure 1. As mentioned previously, the nodes of the dendrogram represent the clusters, with increasing height of the vertical lines indicating a weaker association between clusters. The contents of the clusters are shown in Table 1. Inspecting Figure 1 and relating the contents of the virtues shows the following closely related clusters and meanings: Clusters 1 and 2 contain virtues related to positivity; clusters 3 to 6 contain virtues referring to doing what is right in relation to others; clusters 7 to 12 contain virtues referring to taking care of oneself and reaching goals; clusters 16 and 17 contain virtues referring to quietness. Clusters 13 to 15 and especially clusters 18 to 20 are more separate clusters and each refers to a single virtue, except for cluster 15, which contains three virtues.

Figure 1. *Results of the hierarchical cluster analysis presented in a dendrogram*



Note. The virtues belonging to each node are presented in Table 1

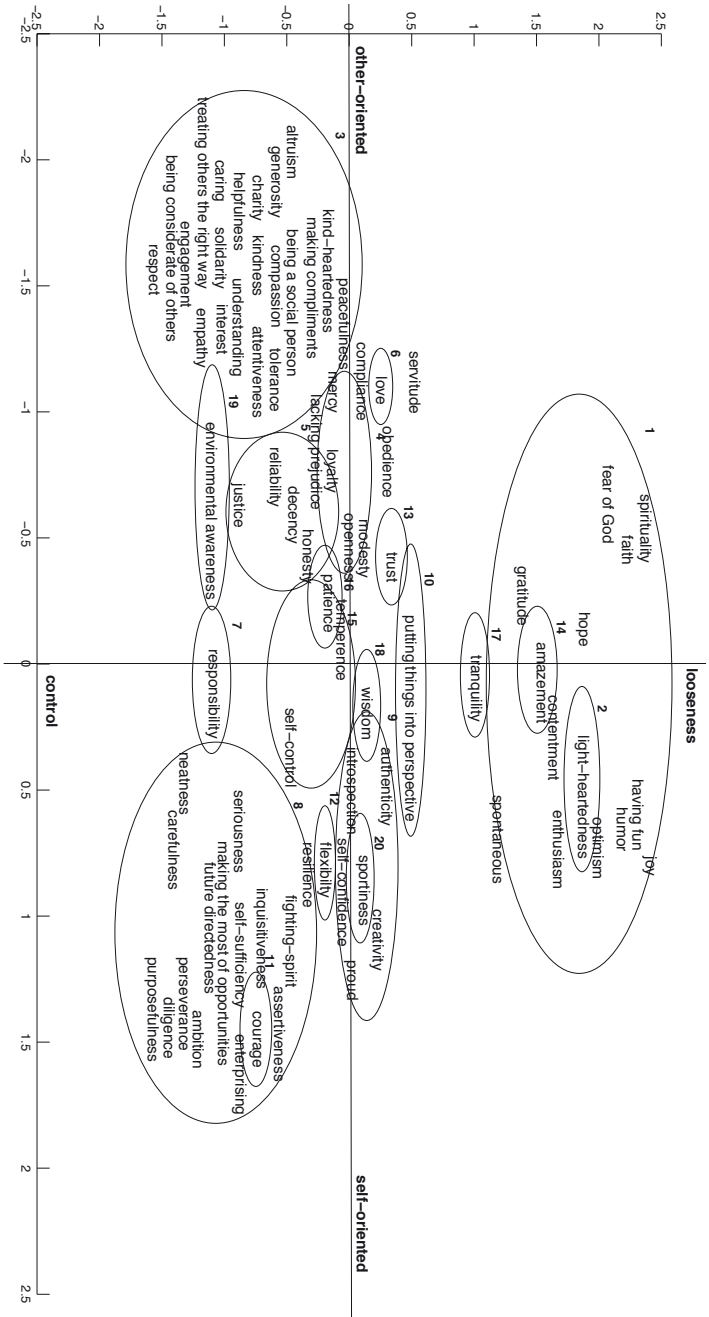
Table 1. *The 80 virtues divided into the 20 clusters, as identified in the hierarchical cluster analysis*

Cluster	Virtues in the cluster		
1	Joy Humor Optimism Having fun Spontaneity	Faith Obedience Contentment Hope Servitude	Enthusiasm Spirituality Compliance Gratitude Fear of God
2	Light-heartedness		
3	Respect Friendliness Helpfulness Being a social person Tolerance Solidarity Engagement Attentiveness	Caring Understanding Empathy Being considerate of others Treating others the right way Mercy Interest	Making compliments Altruism Charity Compassion Peacefulness Generosity Kind-heartedness
4	Openness	Lacking prejudice	
5	Honesty Reliability	Loyalty Justice	
6	Love		
7	Responsibility		
8	Self-sufficiency Perseverance Assertiveness Enterprising Neatness Inquisitiveness	Future-directedness Creativity Diligence Ambition Purposefulness Seriousness	Making the most of opportunities Fighting-spirit Resilience Carefulness Decency
9	Authenticity Self-confidence	Introspection Pride	
10	Putting things into perspective		
11	Courage		
12	Flexibility		
13	Trust		
14	Amazement		
15	Self-control	Modesty	Temperance
16	Patience		
17	Tranquility		
18	Wisdom		
19	Environmental awareness		
20	Sportiness		

Note. The numbers of the clusters correspond with the numbers on the x-axis in the dendrogram (Figure 1). The virtues are translated from the Dutch

Results of the MCA. The MCA resulted in the 80 virtues in a 2-dimensional space as depicted in Figure 2. The 20 clusters found in the HCA are depicted by ellipses, with their associated cluster numbers. The total inertia (a goodness of fit measure) of the two dimensions found in the MCA is 77%, with the first dimension accounting for 42%, and the second dimension for 35%. These two dimensions could be labeled 'other-versus-self oriented', opposing virtues that refer to concern for others on the one hand, to virtues that refer to behavior directed at reaching one's own goals on the other hand, and 'looseness-versus-control', opposing hedonistic and transcendental virtues on the one hand, to virtues referring to controlling one's impulses and desires on the other hand. As explained previously, the closer the virtues are to each other, and the more distant they are to the origin (0,0), the stronger the relationship between these virtues. The virtues close to the origin, such as *wisdom* and *temperance* (see Figure 2), appear difficult to classify in the two dimensions, while virtues more distant, such as *joy*, and *purposefulness*, are well-classified. The clusters found in the HCA can, to a reasonable extent, be traced back in the results of the MCA. Below, we will discuss in more detail the comparison of the results of the HCA and the MCA, in order to come to a solid-based grouping of the 80 virtues.

Figure 2. *Results of the multiple correspondence analysis represented in a two-dimensional space. The 20 clusters found in the HCA are depicted by ellipses with their associated numbers as best as possible*



Grouping of the 80 virtues based on the results of the HCA and MCA. To identify the virtue types, we considered the following: 1. the results of the HCA, 2. the results of the MCA, 3. the semantic meaning of the virtues within a virtue type, that is, we had to be able to arrive at a label that reflected the meaning of all virtues within the virtue type, and 4. the minimal frequency of mentioning by the respondents in study 1; the virtues within a virtue type together had to be mentioned by more than 1% of the respondents.

We start by considering the 20 clusters found in the HCA. Clusters 1, 3 and 8 (see Table 1) contain large numbers of virtues. The virtues in cluster 1 do not all appear close to each other in the MCA results (see Figure 2), and they have a range of different semantic meanings. Cluster 1 contains hedonistic virtues, like *joy* and *enthusiasm*, transcendental virtues, like *faith* and *spirituality*, and virtues referring to being submissive, like *obedience* and *servitude*. Therefore, we decided to split cluster 1 into three virtue types: 1. *joy, having fun, humor, optimism, enthusiasm, spontaneity, contentment*; 2. *hope, fear of God, spirituality, faith, gratitude*; 3. *obedience, servitude*, and *compliance*. All virtues in cluster 3 appear to be close to each other in the MCA results, and they share the same semantic meaning. Therefore, we considered the virtues in cluster 3 to belong to one single virtue type. The virtues in cluster 8 appear close to each other in the MCA results, except for *decency* (see Figure 2). *Decency* also seems to be semantically different from the other virtues, since most virtues in cluster 8 refer to developing and managing oneself, while *decency* instead refers to behaving in accordance with social norms towards others. Therefore, we decided to consider all virtues in cluster 8 to be one virtue type, but exclude *decency*, making this a separate virtue type.

For the remaining HCA clusters, we examined whether they could be joined into a single virtue type. Based on the HCA dendrogram (see Figure 1, showing that clusters 1 and 2 are closely related), the results of the MCA (see Figure 2), and the semantic meaning of the virtues, we attached *light-heartedness* (which formed cluster 2) to virtue type 1, which includes virtues as *joy* and *having fun*. The remaining clusters could not be merged with another cluster. On the base of the frequency criterion, we decided to delete six of these clusters, which are *putting things into perspective* (cluster 10), *flexibility* (cluster 12), *amazement* (cluster 14), *tranquility* (cluster 17), *environmental awareness* (cluster 19), and *sportiness* (cluster 20). The splitting, combining and deleting of the virtue clusters resulted in 16 virtue types, which are shown in Table 2. The labels are based on the most frequently mentioned virtue within the type.

Table 2. *The 16 virtue types with labels in English (original Dutch labels in brackets)*

Virtue type	Virtues belonging to the type		
Joy (Vreugde)	Joy Having fun Humor	Optimism Enthusiasm Spontaneity	Contentment Light-heartedness
Hope (Hoop)	Hope Fear of God	Spirituality Faith	Gratitude
Obedience (Gehoorzaamheid)	Obedience	Servitude	Compliance
Respect (Respect)	Respect Kindness Helpfulness Being a social person Tolerance Solidarity Engagement Attentiveness	Caring Understanding Empathy Being considerate of others Treating others the right way Mercy Interest	Making compliments Altruism Charity Compassion Peacefulness Generosity Kind-heartedness
Openness (Openheid)	Openness	Lacking prejudice	
Honesty (Eerlijkheid)	Honesty Reliability	Loyalty Justice	
Love (Liefde)	Love		
Responsibility (Verantwoordelijkheid)	Responsibility		
Self-sufficiency (Zelfredzaamheid)	Self-sufficiency Perseverance Assertiveness Enterprising Neatness Inquisitiveness	Future-directedness Creativity Diligence Ambition Purposefulness Seriousness	Making the most of opportunities Fighting-spirit Resilience Carefulness
Decency (Fatsoen)	Decency		
Self-confidence (Zelfvertrouwen)	Self-confidence Authenticity	Introspection Pride	
Courage (Moed)	Courage		
Trust (Vertrouwen)	Trust		
Self-control (Zelfbeheersing)	Self-control	Modesty	Temperance
Patience (Geduld)	Patience		
Wisdom (Wijsheid)	Wisdom		

Group differences. Having defined our virtue types, it is of interest to compare the frequencies in which the virtue types are mentioned by the various groups of respondents in study 1. If a respondent mentioned more than one virtue within a virtue type, this counted for only once. We first compared the relative frequencies within and across respondent groups. For each virtue type, we computed the percentage of respondents that mentioned a virtue of that type per respondent group, as well as the mean percentage across groups. Table 3 shows these percentages, ranked according to the percentages within and across respondent groups. Among all respondent groups, *respect* appears to be mentioned most frequently.

Moreover, to find out whether there are shared virtues across the different religious and secular groups, for each virtue type per religious affiliation group we computed the percentage of respondents that mentioned a virtue of that type, and the mean percentage across groups. In order to correct for the unequal spreading of the religious affiliation groups among the teachers, council members, and pupils, we first computed the percentages within each of these three respondent groups separately, and then computed the mean percentage across respondent groups. Table 4 shows the ranking of the 16 clusters based on these percentages within and across religious affiliation groups. Among all four groups, *respect* is mentioned most frequently by far, followed by *honesty*, *self-sufficiency*, *joy*, *openness*, and *self-confidence*. Remarkable differences between the Muslim and non-Muslim respondents are that *joy* was mentioned less frequently, and *openness* and *hope* were mentioned more frequently among the Muslims compared to the other groups. In addition, only the Muslim group did not mention *trust*. With regard to remarkable differences across all four religious affiliation groups, *responsibility* appears to be mentioned more frequently among the Catholics and Protestants than among the Muslim and secular respondents, and *honesty* is mentioned less frequently by the secular respondents than by respondents of the three religious groups.

Table 3. *Order of ranking of the 16 virtue types for the teachers, council members, and pupils, based on the frequencies in which the virtue types are mentioned within each group*

Ranking of the virtue type	**Teachers (*n* = 72)**	**Council members (*n* = 198)**	**Pupils (*n* = 279)**	**All respondents (*n* = 549)**
1	Respect (83%)	Respect (86%)	Respect (89%)	Respect (86%)
2	Self-sufficiency (43%)	Honesty (36%)	Joy (37%)	Honesty (36%)
3	Honesty (40%)	Responsibility (26%)	Honesty (31%)	Joy (27%)
4	Self-confidence (35%)	Openness (25%)	Openness (12%)	Self-sufficiency (26%)
5	Joy (32%)	Self-sufficiency (24%)	Self-sufficiency (10%)	Self-confidence (16%)
6	Responsibility (17%)	Joy (13%)	Love (9%)	Openness (16%)
7	Hope (10%)	Wisdom (9%)	Self-confidence (6%)	Responsibility (14%)
8	Obedience (10%)	Self-confidence (8%)	Decency (6%)	Love (7%)
9	Openness (10%)	Love (7%)	Patience (5%)	Decency (6%)
10	Decency (8%)	Self-control (6%)	Hope (4%)	Hope (6%)
11	Self-control (8%)	Patience (5%)	Trust (3%)	Self-control (5%)
12	Wisdom (6%)	Trust (5%)	Self-control (2%)	Wisdom (5%)
13	Love (6%)	Courage (5%)	Courage (1%)	Obedience (4%)
14	Courage (3%)	Decency (3%)	Wisdom (1%)	Patience (4%)
15	Patience (1%)	Hope (3%)	Obedience (<1%)	Courage (3%)
16		Obedience (3%)		Trust (3%)

Note. For the column 'all respondents' the mean of the percentages within each group is used

Table 4. *Order of ranking of the 16 virtue types for the Catholics, Protestants, Muslims and secular respondents, based on the frequencies in which the virtue types are mentioned within each group*

Ranking of the virtue type	**Catholic respondents (*n* = 96)**	**Protestant respondents (*n* = 121)**	**Islamic respondents (*n* = 99)**	**Secular respondents (*n* = 222)**	**All respondents (*n* = 538)**
1	Respect (92%)	Respect (94%)	Respect (83%)	Respect (81%)	Respect (88%)
2	Honesty (37%)	Honesty (44%)	Honesty (47%)	Joy (30%)	Honesty (39%)
3	Joy (28%)	Joy (32%)	Self-sufficiency (34%)	Self-sufficiency (28%)	Self-sufficiency (27%)
4	Self-sufficiency (25%)	Self-sufficiency (21%)	Openness (27%)	Honesty (27%)	Joy (27%)
5	Self-confidence (21%)	Responsibility (19%)	Joy (17%)	Self-confidence (14%)	Openness (18%)
6	Openness (17%)	Self-confidence (18%)	Self-confidence (13%)	Openness (11%)	Self-confidence (17%)
7	Responsibility (16%)	Openness (16%)	Hope (10%)	Responsibility (8%)	Responsibility (12%)
8	Love (7%)	Decency (10%)	Wisdom (8%)	Wisdom (6%)	Love (6%)
9	Decency (6%)	Love (9%)	Patience (7%)	Self-control (7%)	Decency (6%)
10	Trust (4%)	Patience (6%)	Decency (6%)	Love (5%)	Hope (6%)
11	Obedience (4%)	Obedience (5%)	Self-control (5%)	Hope (5%)	Wisdom (5%)
12	Hope (4%)	Hope (5%)	Courage (5%)	Trust (2%)	Self-control (5%)
13	Wisdom (3%)	Self-control (5%)	Love (4%)	Courage (2%)	Patience (4%)
14	Patience (3%)	Wisdom (3%)	Obedience (4%)	Decency (2%)	Obedience (4%)
15	Self-control (2%)	Trust (3%)	Responsibility (4%)	Obedience (1%)	Courage (3%)
16	Courage (2%)	Courage (1%)		Patience (1%)	Trust (2%)

Note. For the column 'all respondents' the mean of the percentages within each group is used

Discussion

The aim of the present study was to investigate the virtues relevant to Muslims, Christians (Catholics and Protestants) and secular people in contemporary Dutch society. Therefore, we used a free listing procedure. We obtained a list of 80 virtues mentioned as important by the members of these groups. In line with the findings from previous studies (Smith, et al., 2007), especially virtues that explicitly refer to doing what is right in relation to others, such as *respect*, *kindness*, and *helpfulness*, were frequently mentioned as important across the different groups.

Based on the categorizations of the virtues by a group of independent judges, the 80 virtues can be organized around two dimensions; an 'other-versus-self-oriented' dimension, opposing virtues referring to concern for others on the one hand, to virtues referring to behavior directed at reaching goals for oneself on the other hand, and a 'looseness-versus-control' dimension, opposing virtues referring to hedonistic and transcendental behavior on the one hand, to virtues referring to controlling ones impulses and desires on the other hand. Previous studies that analyzed the semantic categorizations of virtues found dimensions similar to the 'other-versus-self-oriented' dimension (Haslam et al., 2004; Walker and Pitts, 1998). Furthermore, the 'looseness-versus-control' dimension found in the present study resembles the 'vivacity-versus-decency' dimension found by Haslam et al. (2004). The control end of this dimension is similar to the external end of the 'internal-versus-external-oriented' dimension found by Walker and Pitts (1998), although the hedonistic and transcendental virtues belonging to our looseness end did not occur in their study. These findings indicate that both personal agency and community are generally regarded as central aspects of virtues, which is in line with the definition of a virtue as promoting behavior that is good for oneself and for others (McCullough & Snyder, 2000; Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Also, controlling one's impulses and desires seems to be generally regarded as a virtue.

Further analyses of the semantic categorizations of the 80 virtues yielded 16 virtue types. These are *respect*, *honesty*, *joy*, *self-sufficiency*, *self-confidence*, *openness*, *responsibility*, *love*, *decency*, *hope*, *self-control*, *wisdom*, *obedience*, *patience*, *courage*, and *trust*. Some of these 16 virtue types appear to be timeless and universally regarded as important; these are *wisdom*, *courage*, *self-control*, *honesty, respect*, *love* and *hope*. These virtues occur among the six core virtues found by Dahlsgaard et al. (2005) in their analysis of the central writings of eight highly influential religious and philosophical traditions around the world (namely Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Athenian philosophy, Judaism, Christianity and Islam). *Wisdom* and *courage* occur literally among the core virtues formulated by Dahlsgaard et al., and *self-control* resembles the core virtue of temperance. In our study, the virtue type *honesty* includes the virtue justice, which is a core virtue in itself. *Respect* and *love* show similarities with the core virtue humanity, and *hope*

with the core virtue transcendence.

As the present study focused particularly on the virtues relevant to Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch and the degree to which these virtues correspondent with each other, central virtues found in Islamic and Christian traditions and their possible similarities and differences are of special interest. The Netherlands have a Christian tradition. In this tradition, the seven heavenly virtues described by Aquino (1225-1274, see Dahlsgaard et al., 2005; Van Tongeren, 2003) play an important role. Those seven virtues are divided into the four cardinal virtues courage, wisdom, temperance, and justice, and the three theological virtues faith, hope and love. With regard to the Islamic tradition, Alfarabi (871-950, see Dahlsgaard, et. al, 2005; Mahdi, 2001) is considered as highly influential for Islamic philosophy. In his work, the virtues courage, wisdom, temperance, justice and generosity are central (see Dahlsgaard et al., 2005). Alfarabi focuses on the ideal citizen and ruler and does not explicitly mention faith or spirituality as a virtue, but he does state that the exercise of virtue is a spiritual act in itself. Moreover, based on the central inclusion of God in most early Islamic philosophical writings, faith does in fact seem to play an important role in the Islamic tradition. Therefore, we conclude that the virtues wisdom, courage, temperance, justice and faith occur centrally in both Christian and Islamic tradition. The main difference between the two traditions is that more emphasis is placed on hope and love in Christianity, and on generosity within the Islam. All central virtues in the Christian and Islamic traditions seem to appear among the 16 virtue types found in the present study, where faith belongs to the virtue type labeled *hope* and generosity to the virtue type labeled *respect*.

The virtue types *joy, self-sufficiency, self-confidence, openness, responsibility, decency, patience, obedience*, and *trust* do not occur among the six core virtues found by Dahlsgaard et al. (2005) in their analysis of the central writings of the eight religious and philosophical traditions and could be considered modern virtues. These virtues appear neither typical for contemporary Dutch society, nor for Western European societies, since the study conducted by Smith et al. (2007) showed that these virtues are relevant to lay people in at least one of the seven countries that were examined (Guam, Philippines, Palau, Taiwan, Turkey, the US, and Venezuela). *Responsibility* and virtues resembling *joy* (optimism and sense of humor) frequently occurred on the lists found by Smith et al, followed by virtues resembling *self-sufficiency* (independence, assertiveness), *openness* (open-mindedness), *decency* (courteous), *trust* (confident), and the virtue type *patience*. Given the rather wide cultural spread of their study, this suggests these virtues are fairly universally regarded as important. The virtue types *obedience* and *self-confidence* each occurred on the list of only one country, Palau and Turkey, respectively, examined by Smith et al. (2007). Nevertheless, this indicates that these virtues are neither typical for contemporary Dutch society, nor for Western European societies.

A comparison of the Islamic, Christian (Catholics and Protestants), and secular

respondents with respect to the frequencies in which they mentioned the 16 virtue types, showed that among all religious and secular groups, the same six virtue types, which are *respect, honesty, self-sufficiency, joy, openness,* and *self-confidence*, belong to the seven most frequently mentioned virtue types. This finding suggests that these six virtue types are highly relevant to both Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch. Therefore, they could be useful to improve the relations between these groups. *Respect, honesty* and *openness* seem virtues with a social character in particular, and, therefore, may be especially applicable in improving intergroup relations. *Respect* and *honesty* (referred to by justice and reliability) were also rated as highly important by Muslims, Christians and secular Dutch in the study of Van Oudenhoven et al. (2012).

We also found some differences between the frequencies in which the 16 virtue types were mentioned by Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch. Muslim respondents mentioned *openness* and *hope* more frequently, and *joy* and *trust* less frequently, compared with non-Muslims. The finding that Muslim respondents mentioned *hope* more frequently is contradictory to the finding that *hope* is a more central virtue in the Christian tradition. However, this virtue type includes the virtue faith and the study of Van Oudenhoven et al. (2012) showed that faith was rated as more important by Muslim Dutch compared to non-Muslim Dutch. This finding may indicate that religion is more central to the lives of Muslims than it is within the other groups.

Limitations

A possible limitation of the present study is that we focused on particular groups in society, namely school teachers, municipal council members, and secondary school pupils. Some of the virtue types that were identified may be specific for these groups and not representative for Dutch society as a whole. *Obedience*, for example, might be a virtue regarded especially important within a school setting (note that this virtue is mentioned most frequently by the teachers). However, for the other virtues we see no clear connection between their content and the societal role of the three respondents groups and, therefore, we do not expect the 16 virtues to be specifically relevant to these three groups. Another possible limitation is that, of the total group of respondents, nine percent did not provide answers to the questions about the virtues they regarded as important. These missing values can challenge the generalizability of our results, because they may concern a group of respondents with specific, yet unknown, characteristics. With regard to the categorizations of the virtues, a possible limitation is that we paid no attention to the religious or secular backgrounds of the judges. It cannot be ruled out that the categorization has been influenced by their interpretations, and that virtue interpretations may differ across different religious and secular groups. Furthermore,

we compared the Muslims, Catholics, Protestant and secular Dutch based on the virtue types mentioned. Of course, the archetypical Muslim does not exist, neither does the archetypical Catholic, Protestant or secularist. Within each group, there are many different kinds of traditions and opinions. Therefore, there will be variation with regard to specific virtues regarded as relevant within the four religious and secular groups as well.

Conclusion and directions for future research

The most important result of the present study is that we obtained a list of 16 virtues relevant to different groups of people in contemporary Dutch society. Of these 16 virtues, 15 virtues were mentioned by the Muslim, Christian (Catholic and Protestant) as well as the secular respondents. Moreover, Muslims and non-Muslims seem to agree on the virtues they regard as particularly relevant to a large extent. This finding supports the idea that virtues may be useful instruments to improve the relations between these groups. Especially *respect, honesty* and *openness* may be applicable virtues, since these virtues are frequently mentioned as important across all groups, and they seem to have a social character in particular. Further research should further explore the potential usefulness of these virtues in enhancing bridging social capital, by investigating their meaning for actual attitudes and behavior towards others, including members of different cultural and religious groups.

CHAPTER 3
VIRTUE INTERPRETATIONS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

There is ample empirical evidence for the existence of shared virtues across different cultural and religious groups around the world (Dahlsgaard, Peterson & Seligman, 2005; Park, Peterson & Seligman, 2006; Smith, Smith & Christopher, 2007), as well as within a society (Chapter 2; Van Oudenhoven, de Raad, Carmona, Helbig & Van der Linden, 2012). These findings show that members of different cultural and/or religious groups agree on the importance of displaying certain virtues. Since virtues refer to traits that yield benefits to oneself and to others (McCullough & Snyder, 2000; Peterson & Seligman, 2004), they can promote behavior that contributes to a positive relationship with others, including outgroup members. Therefore, we think that virtues can be a useful concept in enhancing bridging social capital in contemporary culturally and religiously diverse Western European societies.

Nevertheless, for virtues to be useful to enhance bridging social capital within a society, they must not only be shared among members of different groups, but citizens must also interpret these virtues in a way that promotes behavior that positively contributes to bridging social capital. Virtues can be interpreted in various ways, and some interpretations may encourage behavior that strengthens bridging social capital more than others. *Respect*, for example, appears to be regarded as a very important virtue across different cultures (Chapter 2; Smith et al., 2007; Van Oudenhoven et al., 2012), but it is also a good example of a virtue with several interpretations (Lalljee, Tam, Hewstone, Laham, & Lee, 2009). Moreover, virtue interpretations may vary across different cultural and/or religious groups. If the interpretation of a virtue varies a lot, it can be hard to use this virtue for improving intergroup relations. Therefore, knowing how different groups of citizens interpret virtues is important to find out whether virtues could be a useful concept to enhance bridging social capital, and if so, which virtues would be most useful. This is the aim of the present study, which focuses on different groups of citizens in contemporary Dutch society.

The present research

In order to investigate virtue interpretations among Dutch citizens, we performed semi-structured interviews with members of the four major religious and non-religious groups in the Netherlands: secularists (44% of the Dutch population), Catholics (27%), Protestants (17%), and Muslims (5%) (Statistics Netherlands, 2009a, 2009b). In addition, a group of so-called spiritual respondents was included, who regard themselves as religious but not belong to any traditional religious group. This seems to be an upcoming group in the Netherlands (Kronjee & Lampert, 2006), as well as in other Western European countries (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). We chose to conduct semi-structured interviews. The reason for doing so was to invite respondents to explore those issues they regarded as relevant, while at the

same time providing the structure necessary in order to obtain the information we needed. Respondents were asked to describe each of the virtues found to be relevant to contemporary Dutch society (Chapter 2), to give examples of how to express these virtues in behavior, and to describe in what instances expressing these virtues would be important. This way, we aimed at gathering information regarding respondents' interpretations of the virtues as well as the relevance of these virtues to their daily lives. With regard to the latter, we also asked respondents to rank the virtues to the degree to which they pursued to possess the virtues. Furthermore, we explored whether respondents' religious background might influence the way they interpreted the given virtues.

Method

Respondents

For this study, we interviewed 23 Dutch adults, 11 males and 12 females, with a mean age of 38 years (range 22-62, *SD* = 12.20). The respondents were recruited via acquaintances of the researchers and were selected to achieve an equal spread between people with different religious and secular backgrounds. With respect to the secular respondents, an additional condition for participating was that neither parent had a religious background, because otherwise a religious upbringing could have influenced secular respondents' virtue interpretations. The traditional religious respondents were selected on the basis of their degree of religious participation, to end up with respondents with various degrees of religious participation within each group. This was indicated by our own knowledge or information provided by our acquaintances about respondents' (non-)membership of a religious institution and their frequency of visits to religious services (excluding funerals and weddings).

Apart from selection on the basis of religious or secular background, we ensured that, within each religious and secular group, the numbers of males versus females, and younger (20 to 40 years) versus older (41 to 60 years) respondents were evenly distributed. We only included respondents who had received a higher education, because we presumed that a certain level of education would be required to be able to reflect on abstract concepts such as virtues.

In total, eight Christians (four Catholic and four Protestant), five Muslims, five spirituals, and five secular respondents were interviewed. An overview of the background information of these respondents is given in Table 1.

Table 1. *Background information of the 23 respondents participating in the interviews*

Respondent	Gender	Age (years)	Native country	Religious background	Member of a Religious community	Number of visits to religious services per year	Importance of religion to daily life (scale 1-5)
1	Female	58	The Netherlands	Catholic	yes	20	3.83
2	Male	38	The Netherlands	Catholic	yes	3	2.67
3	Male	30	The Netherlands	Catholic	yes	5	2.50
4	Female	53	The Netherlands	Catholic	yes	0	1.00
5	Female	57	The Netherlands	Protestant	yes	50	4.33
6	Female	32	The Netherlands	Protestant	yes	4	3.67
7	Male	28	The Netherlands	Protestant	no	4	3.00
8	Male	22	The Netherlands	Protestant	yes	15	2.50
9	Female	33	The Netherlands	Muslim	yes	7	4.80
10	Male	27	The Netherlands	Muslim	no	30	4.80
11	Male	29	The Netherlands	Muslim	no	12	4.50
12	Male	29	Turkey	Muslim	no	40	3.50
13	Female	43	Turkey	Muslim	unknown	Unknown	unknown
14	Female	51	The Netherlands	Spiritual	n/a	n/a	5.00
15	Female	51	The Netherlands	Spiritual	n/a	n/a	4.33
16	Female	62	The Netherlands	Spiritual	n/a	n/a	3.67
17	Male	31	The Netherlands	Spiritual	n/a	n/a	3.67
18	Male	48	The Netherlands	Spiritual	n/a	n/a	3.50
19	Female	28	The Netherlands	None	n/a	n/a	n/a
20	Female	30	The Netherlands	None	n/a	n/a	n/a
21	Male	30	The Netherlands	None	n/a	n/a	n/a
22	Male	35	The Netherlands	None	n/a	n/a	n/a
23	Female	53	The Netherlands	None	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note. n/a means not applicable

Procedure

The respondents were contacted by e-mail or telephone. We briefly explained the purpose of this study, and asked respondents whether they were willing to participate. Except for one, all contacted persons agreed to do so.

The interviews, ranging from 1.5 to 2.5 hours, were all conducted by the author of this thesis. The virtues selected in this study were *love, respect, tolerance, helpfulness, honesty, joy, openness, wisdom, trust, patience, self-sufficiency, responsibility, self-control, self-confidence, decency, hope, courage,* and *obedience*. These are the 16 virtue types[1] established as relevant to contemporary Dutch society (Chapter 2), plus the virtues *tolerance* and *helpfulness*. These two virtues were included because they belong to the virtue type *respect*, which contains a large number of virtues. In order to gain an insight into the content of this virtue type, we decided to ask respondents for their interpretation of these three virtues instead of only *respect*. We chose *tolerance* and *helpfulness*, because these virtues were frequently mentioned as important by the respondents in the study described in Chapter 2.

First, respondents were asked to rank the 18 virtues according to the degree to which they pursued to possess these virtues. The respondents had to divide the virtues into six columns, putting the three virtues they pursued most in the first column, the virtues they pursued second most in the second column, etcetera. In this way, respondents were forced to make choices between the virtues, and they could not rank all of them as strongly pursued. From each ranking, we derived a rank score for each of the 18 virtues. The three virtues ranked as most pursued received a rank score of 6, the three virtues ranked as second most pursued received a score of 5, etcetera.

Second, in an interview, respondents were asked to describe each of the 18 virtues. This was the most important part of the study, because it concerned respondents' interpretation of the 18 virtues. For each virtue, respondents were asked three open-ended questions about: (1) their definition of the virtue, (2) examples of displaying the virtue, and (3) situations in which displaying the virtue would be very important.

After the interview, respondents were asked to fill in a short questionnaire containing questions about their age, and, except for the secular and spiritual respondents, their (non-) membership of a religious community and visits to religious services. Furthermore, the religious respondents were asked about the importance of religion to their daily lives. We used this questionnaire in order to verify whether

1 *Of these 16 virtues, trust was not mentioned by the Muslim respondents that participated in the study described in Chapter 2. Nevertheless, we included trust in the present study, since this may be a useful virtue in enhancing bridging social capital in particular. This is further investigated within this study, including its relevance to the Muslim participants.*

we had succeeded in achieving variety in the degree of religious participation among respondents within each traditional religious group, and to achieve variety in the importance of religion to the daily lives of the respondents within each religious group, including spirituals. The importance of religion to daily life was measured on a scale that consisted of six items. The respondents could rate the degree in which they agreed with each item on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (strongly). An example of an item is "my religion/philosophy of life is important to my identity". These six items were also included in the sample described in Chapter 4, and they showed a good reliability ($\alpha = .93$).

Analyses

For the religious respondents, we used the religiosity scale scores to assess whether the degree of religiosity was evenly distributed among the respondents within each religious group, as we intended to have in our sample.

With regard to the interview results, the answers of the respondents to the three open-ended questions concerning their interpretations of the 18 virtues were recorded and transcribed. For each virtue, the answers to the three questions showed great overlap and, therefore, they were analyzed together. For the analyses, Kwalitan qualitative software was used (version 5.0 for Windows, 2000). We examined how each virtue was being interpreted by coding the most important features mentioned by the respondents, using an open coding approach as described in grounded theory methodology (e.g., Birks & Mills, 2011; Kendall, 1999). Grounded theory was founded by Glaser and Strauss in 1967 and aims at generating theory from data (cf. Birks & Mills, 2011). In grounded theory methodology, data are analyzed during data collection by the process of coding. Based on similarities and differences in codes ascribed to the data, codes are clustered into categories. This process continues until conceptual saturation is reached, meaning no new categories are generated from the open codes. The relations among the established categories are then analyzed.

In this study, we opted for an open coding approach so we wouldn't be driven by preconceived ideas regarding possible virtue interpretations. Besides, several interpretations of a single virtue may exist. In the case of *respect*, for example, codes ascribed to answers of the respondents were 'value others in what they are' and 'admiration', and in the case of *wisdom* 'thinking before acting' and 'knowledge'. The respondents' answers could receive several different codes, reflecting various kinds of themes concerning their interpretation of the virtue. In the case of *honesty*, for example, next to 'telling the truth', codes frequently ascribed to respondents' answers were 'not always positive' and 'similar to openness'. Almost all virtue interpretations could be coded to the degree to which the virtue was regarded as important for oneself (coded 'self-oriented'), in relation to others

(coded 'other-oriented'), or both for oneself and in relation to others (coded 'self-other-oriented').

After coding all the answers, we analyzed whether codes ascribed to a specific virtue reflected similar themes and clustered these codes into one category. For example, in the case of *respect*, we clustered into one category the codes 'value others in what they are', 'being non-condemning' and 'being unprejudiced', and in the case of *wisdom*, 'thinking before acting', 'foreseeing', and 'thinking ahead'. We explored the degree in which the categories were mentioned by the respondents to find out to what extent respondents agreed on their virtue interpretations, and which interpretations were most common.

Subsequently, we computed the mean rank scores for each of the virtues in order to find out which virtues were pursued most, and we examined the extent to which the ranking of the virtues by the respondents corresponded with what they had said about the virtues in the interviews.

In the end, we explored whether there were indications for associations between the religious background of the respondents and their virtue interpretations. We investigated whether specific themes occurred in the virtue interpretations of respondents of each religious group. In addition, we assessed whether there was an association between respondents' gender and virtue interpretations.

Results

Respondents' degree of religiosity

The religious respondents' religiosity scale scores and their degree of religious participation are shown in Table 1. One of the respondents did not fill in the questions regarding her degree of religiosity and religious participation. As can be seen in Table 1, the reported degree of religiosity did indeed vary within each group, with a minimally observed range of 1.3 (with a maximally possible range of 4), just as the degree of religious participation based on the frequency of visits to religious services.

Virtue interpretations

For each virtue, summaries of the answers of the respondents to the three open-ended questions concerning their interpretations will be presented here. These three open-ended questions were: (1) How would you define [the virtue]? (2) How can [the virtue] be displayed? (3) What are situations in which displaying [the virtue] is important? The virtues are presented in descending order of mean rank score of being worth pursued.

Love. Two main interpretations of *love* were mentioned in the interviews: (1) attention and compassion to others and being there for others, and (2) trying to see the good side of others. A large group of respondents mentioned both interpretations. A way to express *love* in behavior is by being caring, friendly and non-condemning towards others. Most respondents who solely used the first interpretation of *love* regarded this virtue as especially important with respect to closely related others, such as their partners, relatives and friends. Respondents who also or solely mentioned the second interpretation often applied *love* to a broader group of people, if not all people. Some of the respondents also mentioned accepting and appreciating oneself in their descriptions of *love*. Most of them regarded this as a condition for being able to show *love* towards others.

Helpfulness. Only one interpretation of *helpfulness* emerged from the interviews, which was helping a person when he or she asks for help or when one can see that he or she needs help. Helping does not only mean practical assistance, but also being there for others, listening to them, and advising them. Half of the respondents stated that *helpfulness* means that one spontaneously offers help and does not wait until being asked to help. Most respondents regarded *helpfulness* as important in relation to familiar others as well as unfamiliar others.

Respect. For *respect*, three different interpretations were mentioned in the interviews: (1) being unprejudiced, understanding, and considerate of others (referring to 'unconditional respect for persons' as distinguished by Lalljee et al., 2009), (2) the acknowledgement of status differences by being modest in relation to a person of higher status (referring to 'status respect' as distinguished by Lalljee et al., 2009), and (3) admiring someone for the kind of person he or she is or for what he or she did, by listening to this person and/or verbally expressing your admiration for him or her (referring to 'achieved respect' as distinguished by Lalljee et al., 2009). The first interpretation of *respect* was mentioned most frequently. This kind of *respect* was regarded as always important in relation to others, while 'status respect' was regarded as especially important in relation to elderly people. As a condition for displaying 'achieved respect', it was mentioned that one needs to know something about the other person, otherwise one does not know what to admire.

Joy. The respondents largely agreed on the way they interpreted *joy*. It was interpreted as being cheerful and happy, optimistic, thankful, and being able to enjoy life, put things in perspective and approach things with humor. Most respondents regarded *joy* as a kind of attitude to life that is always important. The respondents differed with respect to the degree in which they regarded *joy* as a virtue particularly important in relation to others or also for oneself. Some of them

described *joy* as a virtue one always shares with others, while others state that *joy* also means being able to enjoy life on one's own.

Honesty. The interpretations of the respondents were highly similar for *honesty*. It was defined as telling the truth and/or expressing one's point of view, and being sincere and reliable. Being honest was regarded as important when another person, or the relation with that person, would benefit from *honesty*, or when asked for your opinion. Accordingly, *honesty* was regarded as a virtue important in relation to others, particularly in friendships and more intimate relationships. A few respondents also mentioned the importance of being honest towards oneself, in the sense of facing the truth, and one respondent also mentioned treating people equally in her interpretation of *honesty*.

Wisdom. Three related interpretations of *wisdom* were mentioned in the interviews: (1) insight into life and human character based on knowledge and experience, (2) considering the consequences before proceeding to act in order to make deliberate choices, and (3) being able to differentiate. The first interpretation could be regarded as a condition for the other two. Almost all respondents mentioned the first and second interpretations. *Wisdom* was often related to difficult moral dilemmas, although it was also regarded as important in daily choices. *Wisdom* was the only virtue for which we were unable to code the degree in which it was regarded as important for oneself, in relation to others, or both.

Responsibility. For *responsibility*, two related interpretations were mentioned: (1) being committed, in the sense of showing initiative, keeping one's promises, and doing the best one can, and (2) considering the consequences of one's actions. The first interpretation could be regarded as a consequence of the latter, since not keeping your promises or doing the best you can may have negative consequences for oneself and/or others. *Responsibility* was regarded especially important when other people are involved, that is, in relation to others.

Openness. In the case of *openness*, two different interpretations emerged from the interviews, which were (1) being open about oneself, that is, expressing one's feelings, thoughts and opinions, and (2) being open towards others, in the sense of being unprejudiced, interested and understanding towards others. Most of the respondents interpreted *openness* as being open about oneself. This was regarded as important in intimate relationships and in conflicts. Most of the respondents that interpreted *openness* as being open towards others also mentioned being open about oneself, regarding both as important in order to be able to understand and learn from each other. One respondent mentioned another interpretation of *openness*, which was being open to that which there is between heaven and earth.

Trust. Two main interpretations of *trust* were mentioned: (1) interpersonal *trust*, i.e., assuming that other persons want the best for you and do what they say, and (2) believing that things will turn out the right way. In addition to these interpretations, giving *trust* to others, in the sense of encouraging and supporting them, and *trust* in oneself, in the sense of relying on one's own intuition and experiences, were mentioned. Most respondents interpreted *trust* as interpersonal trust and this was regarded as essential for social relations. As a consequence, *trust* was generally regarded as important in relation to others.

Self-confidence. For *self-confidence*, two related interpretations were mentioned in the interviews: (1) accepting yourself the way you are, with all your qualities and imperfections, and believing that you are good enough, (2) believing in one's own capacities and being firm. Almost all respondents mentioned both interpretations. In general, *self-confidence* was regarded as a virtue that is important for oneself. However, a few respondents mentioned that it is also important in relation to others, because people with *self-confidence* are pleasant company and can be inspiring.

Tolerance. The respondents largely agreed on their interpretation of *tolerance*, which was interpreted as accepting that someone has a different vision or acts in a way one does not prefer. Some respondents added being non-condemning and realizing there are multiple visions and opinions to their interpretation. Accordingly, *tolerance* is a virtue regarded as important in relation to others. It was often mentioned as necessary in order to be able to live together.

Self-sufficiency. For *self-sufficiency*, respondents largely agreed on the interpretation of being able to take care of oneself and being independent of others. Most of the respondents mainly thought of practical things when they described *self-sufficiency*, like earning one's own income. Some also interpreted it as being able to enjoy spending time alone, i.e., being independent of others in order to enjoy oneself. Most respondents regarded *self-sufficiency* as a virtue important for oneself. A few respondents argued it is important in relation to others, because when you are self-sufficient you do not bother other people and you can positively contribute to a relationship, group or society.

Patience. *Patience* was interpreted as being able to stay quiet and calm in stressful and/or undesirable situations and give something or someone time and space. *Patience* was regarded as a virtue that is important for oneself as well as in relation to others. It is important for oneself because it enables one to control impulses, making it easier to persist in one's goals. It is important in relation to others, because it encourages one to give others the time to tell their story, make a

decision, or to discover, learn or finish something without feeling pushed. This was considered particularly important with regard to children.

Courage. For *courage*, only one interpretation was mentioned, which was doing or saying something without knowing the consequences of one's actions and regardless of the risks and fears that are involved. In general, *courage* was regarded as a virtue that is important for oneself as well as in relation to others. It is important for oneself because it enables someone to express his or her opinion and to stand up for oneself, and in relation to others, because it motivates someone to come up for others, for example when they are in danger or unpleasant things are said about them.

Decency. Two related interpretations of *decency* emerged from the interviews: (1) adapting to the norms that are valid in a certain culture or situation, and (2) being considerate of others and behaving properly in relation to them. The majority of the respondents stated that what is regarded as proper depends on the norms valid within the specific culture or situation and *decency* is adapting to these norms. *Decency* was regarded especially important in relation to unfamiliar others.

Self-control. Respondents agreed on their interpretation of *self-control* to a large extent. The virtue was described as being able to control one's emotions and impulses, and resist temptations when they are harmful to oneself, to others, or to the relationship with others. As a consequence, *self-control* was regarded as a virtue important for oneself as well as in relation to others. It was regarded as important especially in conflict situations, where rage could cause harm to oneself, another person, or the relationship with that person.

Hope. For *hope*, one interpretation was mentioned, which was being optimistic and wishing or expecting things to turn out all right or to get better. *Hope* can give the strength to keep going at times of desperation. Some respondents regarded *hope* as a motivation to come into action, while others associated *hope* with passive waiting until things get better. *Hope* was regarded as a virtue that is important for oneself, but also in relation to others, since you can inspire and support other people with your *hope*.

Obedience. For *obedience*, only one interpretation emerged from the interviews, which was doing what someone else tells or expects you to do. *Obedience* was regarded as important in situations where others have a better overview or more knowledge than you do. As a consequence, it was regarded as important especially for children, since they may not be able to see the consequences of their

behavior. Besides, *obedience* was regarded as important with respect to rules that are for the good of oneself and others, for example rules in traffic such as stopping for a red sign. Therefore, *obedience*, too, was regarded as a virtue important for oneself as well as in the relationship with others.

The interpretations of the virtues described above showed that for most virtues only one or a few related interpretations were mentioned in the interviews. For only four virtues, several distinct interpretations could be distinguished, namely for the virtues of *love, respect, trust,* and *openness*. Some respondents mentioned various interpretations when they described these four virtues, whereas others mentioned only one interpretation. Furthermore, none of the virtues were regarded as purely important for oneself. Even *self-confidence* and *self-sufficiency* were regarded as important in relation to others as well by some of the respondents.

Based on the interpretations of the virtues, we distinguish eight groups of virtues with similar interpretations, with *love, respect, trust* and *openness* belonging to several groups because of their multiple interpretations. Below, we will describe these eight groups and illustrate with citations from the interviews how we arrived at these groups. An overview of the eight groups, in order of the average ranking of the virtues within each group by the respondents (to be discussed later), is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. *The eight groups of virtues based on similarities in interpretations in the interviews*

Group	Virtues belonging to this group
Concern for others	*Love* (interpreted as attention and compassion to others) *Helpfulness*
Being non-condemning and understanding towards others	*Love* (interpreted as trying to see the good side of others) *Respect* (interpreted as unconditional and/or achieved respect) *Openness* (interpreted as being open towards others or both about oneself and towards others) *Trust* (interpreted as interpersonal trust) *Tolerance*
Being contemplative	*Wisdom* *Responsibility*
Being frank	*Honesty* *Openness* (interpreted as being open about oneself)
Being optimistic	*Joy* *Trust* (interpreted as believing things will turnout the right way) *Hope*
Being self-supportive	*Self-confidence* *Self-sufficiency* *Courage*
Exerting self-restraint	*Self-control* *Patience*
Being compliant	*Respect* (interpreted as status respect) *Decency* *Obedience*

Group 1: Virtues referring to concern for others. The first group of virtues consists of *love* (interpreted as attention and compassion to others) and *helpfulness*, both referring to concern for others and being prepared to make an effort for them. A female secular (53) described love for example as: "*[love is] really having time for someone, listening to someone, and postponing your own business and issues for a while.*"[2] Similar things were mentioned by another female secular (30) describing *helpfulness*: "*[helpfulness is] helping another person, even if you do not really have the time and means to do so. (…) And that can be done in several ways, counseling someone or taking something off someone's hands.*"

Group 2: Virtues referring to being non-condemning and understanding towards others. The second group of virtues consists of *love* (interpreted as trying to see the good side of others), *respect* (interpreted as unconditional and/or achieved respect), *openness* (interpreted as being open to others or both about oneself and to others), *trust* (interpreted as interpersonal trust) and

2 *Citations are translated from the Dutch.*

tolerance, all referring to a non-condemning and understanding attitude towards others. A male spiritual (31), for example, described *love* as: "*It is trying to see the positive side of everybody, being understanding (…), to give everybody you encounter your appreciation (…), and not to oppose others but to cooperate with others.*" This kind of non-condemning and understanding attitude also emerged from the description of *respect* given by a female Protestant (32): "*It is thinking about what urges another person to act in a certain way first, and not immediately giving your own opinion, or telling the other person what to do (…) That you do not immediately condemn other people's behavior*." Similar things were said by a female Protestant (57) in her description of *tolerance*: "*Not immediately having a judgment or conviction, but giving another person the time to tell his/her story*." An understanding attitude also emerged from the description of *openness* given by a male Muslim (29, nr. 12 in Table 1):"*[Openness is] that you are open to the thoughts, actions and opinions of people (…). If you are open you are interested in others (…). You show understanding, that is what it is all about.*"

Trust (interpreted as interpersonal trust) belongs to this group of virtues since, just as *love*, it refers to trying to see the good side of others and, in this way, to a non-condemning attitude. A male secular (30), for example, described *trust* as: "*[trust is] to believe in the goodness of others, their goodwill, without being suspicious or protecting your own interests.*" Also *respect*, defined as achieved respect, refers to seeing the good side of others. A female Catholic (57), for example, described this kind of *respect* as: "*Respect has also to do with admiration, like 'Wow, I really respect that' (…) Yes, there is something good in it. (…) You can show it by saying it, like 'Gee, I think it is great the way you do that', or 'I really admire that'*."

Group 3: Virtues referring to being contemplative. *Wisdom* and *responsibility* belong to the third group of virtues, both referring to considering the consequences before proceeding to act. A male secular (30), for example, described *wisdom* as: "*Wisdom is insight in how things work, and you often need this insight in order to be able to make a responsible decision. This has to do with science (…), but also the interpersonal side of how things work, (…) the probability that someone will be offended because of certain behavior. So, in that way, to have an understanding of the possible consequences of an action.*" Although *wisdom* is related to interpersonal behavior in this citation, this was less often the case for *wisdom* than it was for *responsibility*, which was regarded as important particularly when other people are involved. This becomes evident, for example, in the description of *responsibility* given by a female secular (28): "*Putting on your lights when riding a bicycle in the dark, I think that is a clear example of behaving responsibly, because if you do not do that, you are a danger for other people on the road (…). I think it [responsibility] has to do especially with the consequences of your behavior for other people.*"

Group 4: Virtues referring to being frank. The fourth group of virtues consists of *honesty* and *openness* (interpreted as being open about oneself), both referring to expressing one's true opinion, thoughts and feelings, and regarded as important especially within personal relationships. A female Catholic (58), for example, described *honesty* as: "*Saying things or stating opinions which are important in the relationship with another person...*" A male Catholic (30) mentioned similar things when describing a situation in which displaying *openness* is important: "*A situation in which it is important to be open is a personal relationship, when you say to each other what is bothering you (…) when there are no secrets for each other complicating the relationship.*"

Group 5: Virtues referring to being optimistic. *Joy*, *trust* (interpreted as believing things will turn out the right way) and *hope* belong to the fifth group of virtues, all referring to an optimistic attitude to life. A male secular (35), for example, described *joy* as: "*Believing that basically things will work out and turn out the right way (…) that life is fun.*" Similar things emerged from the descriptions of *hope* and *trust* given by a female Catholic (58): "*It [hope] is closely related to trust. It has a positive sound, (…) having confidence (…) that things will be all right.*"

Group 6: Virtues referring to being self-supportive. The sixth group of virtues consists of *self-confidence*, *self-sufficiency*, and *courage*, which all refer to being able to support oneself and going one's own way, independent of others. Moreover, all three could be regarded as daring to take a risk. A male Catholic (30), for example, described the following example of expressing *courage* in behavior: "*[An example of courage is] intervening if you see someone being maltreated on the streets. You need courage for that. (…). You do not know how the situation will end, nor the consequences of your own action.*" Taking a risk also occurred in the example of expressing *self-confidence* given by a female spiritual (51, nr. 14 in Table 1): "*An example is quitting my job. So many people told me how stupid it was to do that. Self-confidence also has to do with doing things without knowing the outcome; you just feel that it is the right thing to do.*" Also being self-sufficient can be interpreted as taking a risk, as emerges from its description given by a male Muslim (29, nr. 12 in Table 1): "*It [self-sufficiency] is being independent of others, doing things without the help of others (…) if you try to be independent and say 'I will do it myself', you in fact also take a risk.*"

A difference between the three virtues is that *self-confidence* and *self-sufficiency* were regarded as mainly important for oneself, while *courage* was regarded as important for oneself as well as in relation to others. This difference is also evident in the three citations mentioned above.

Group 7: Virtues referring to exerting self-restraint. *Patience* and *self-control* belong to the seventh group of virtues, because both refer to being able to stay calm in various, more or less stressful, situations. A male Muslim (27), for example, described *patience* as: "*Staying calm at moments you perceive as undesirable, particularly in relation to others (…) not reacting immediately in such a situation, but restraining yourself*." Similar things were said by a male spiritual (31) in his description of *self-control*: "*[Self-control is] resisting your emotions when realizing they can be harmful for yourself or for others. [It is] reflection before acting.*" As is evident in these citations, both *patience* and *self-control* were regarded as important for oneself as well as in relation to others. In the case of *patience*, the importance in relation to others was most often related to giving others the time they needed, while in the case of *self-control*, this was most often related to resisting impulses and temptations that may harm another person or the relationship with that person.

Group 8: Virtues referring to being compliant. The eighth group of virtues consists of *respect* (interpreted as status respect), *decency* and *obedience*, which all three refer to complying with norms, orders and rules. A male secular (30), for example, described *respect* as: "*An example of showing respect is approaching elderly people with 'u'* (the Dutch polite form of you) *(…) In that sense, respect is rather similar to being obedient, in the sense that you do something or comply with a certain rule because it is the norm*." The normative character of *decency* appears from the citation of a male Protestant (22) explaining the difference between *love* and *decency*: "*In the case of decency you do something because it is desirable, in the case of love because you really appreciate a person*." *Obedience*, too, was regarded as normative and related to rules, as explained by a female Catholic (58): "*it [obedience] is a certain imposed rule concerning how you should behave. Doing what someone else tells you to do…*"

Relevance of the 8 groups of virtues

As some of the 18 virtues belong to several groups of virtues depending on the way these virtues were interpreted, we took into account respondents' interpretation of the virtues when calculating the mean rank scores of the eight groups of virtues across respondents. The ranking score of each group was calculated as the mean of the ranking scores of the virtues within that group. For the virtues belonging to more than one group (because of their multiple interpretations), respondents' interpretations determined into which group the ranking scores were counted. When respondents mentioned multiple interpretations of a virtue, the score on this virtue was counted several times. In Table 3, summary statistics (mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum) of the rank scores are shown. As can be seen in Table

3, the virtues referring to 'concern for others' were ranked as most pursued on average, followed by the virtues referring to 'being non-condemning and understanding towards others', and to 'being contemplative'. On average, the virtues that refer to 'being compliant' were ranked as least pursued.

Table 3. *Summary statistics of the average ranking scores (scale 1-6, 1= least pursued, 6 = most pursued) of the eight groups of virtues across all respondents (n = 23)*

Group of virtues	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Standard deviation
1. Concern for others: *Love* (attention and compassion to others), *helpfulness*	5.13	3.50	6.00	.71
2. Being non-condemning and understanding towards others: *Love* (trying to see the good side of others), *respect* (unconditional and/or achieved), *openness* (towards others or about oneself and towards others), *trust* (interpersonal), *tolerance*	4.21	3.00	5.50	.55
3. Being contemplative: *Wisdom, responsibility*	4.20	2.50	6.00	.86
4. Being frank: *Honesty, openness* (about oneself)	4.07	1.00	6.00	1.45
5. Being optimistic *Joy, trust* (believing things will turnout the right way), *hope*	3.30	1.00	5.00	.95
6. Being self-supportive *Self-confidence, self-sufficiency, courage*	3.06	1.00	4.33	.80
7. Exerting self-restraint *Patience, self-control*	2.59	1.00	4.50	.94
8. Being compliant *Respect* (status), *decency, obedience*	2.00	1.00	4.00	.96

The finding that the virtues referring to 'concern for others' were pursued most is in line with what was said about these virtues in the interviews. *Love* was often described as a sort of overarching virtue from which other virtues arise, as explained by a male Catholic (30): "*To me, love is a bit an overarching term for the other virtues we already discussed: You love each other, you are there for each other, in easy and hard times, you respect each other, trust each other.*" *Helpfulness* was regarded as important in all interactions with others, as explained by a female secular (28) answering the question when it is important to show *helpfulness*: "*In all things we do together actually (…) it can be important in every situation.*" Also the finding that the virtues referring to 'being compliant' were ranked as least pursued

is in line with what was said about these virtues during the interviews. These virtues were regarded as normative and implying one does not have to think or choose for oneself, which was generally not regarded as desirable. A female protestant (57), for example, said about *obedience*: "*There can be a lot of situations in which you think 'no, that is against my own ideas'. (….) This can be a situation at work in which you think 'It is really nonsense that I have to do this (...).' In that case it is something to talk about and you do not simply have to obey.*"

Furthermore, we found that some virtues can contradict each other. In the interviews, respondents often mentioned that the virtues that refer to being frank (*honesty* and *openness* about oneself) can contradict the virtues that refer to being non-condemning and understanding towards others and to being compliant (especially *respect* and *decency*). For example, a female secular (53) said about *openness:* "*Too much openness can also harm people (…). If I do not like someone, should I be open about that? No, that is contradictory to being respectful…*" Accordingly, displaying these virtues was not always regarded as positive or good. Nevertheless, on average they were ranked as well worth pursuing. This may be due to the fact that these virtues were interpreted in a balanced way: Respondents often mentioned that one should take into account to what extent a relation or situation yields benefits from being honest or open (about oneself).

Religious background and virtue interpretations

Besides investigating how Dutch citizens interpret virtues and the relevance of these virtues to their daily lives, a third research question was whether there were indications for respondents' religious backgrounds being related to their virtue interpretations. We found that when describing the interpretation of *respect* as status respect, most Muslims mentioned the importance of *respect* for elderly people. For example, a male Muslim said (29, nr. 11 in Table 1):"*Respect their age and them knowing more than you know by being modest and, if you disagree, by not telling them.*" Only one of the respondents from the other religious and secular groups mentioned this in his description of status respect.

We found that spiritual respondents tend to interpret some of the virtues, particularly those referring to 'being non-condemning and understanding towards others', in a rather abstract way. This means they related these virtues more to the larger universe and less to direct interaction with others than respondents from the other religious and secular groups. One of the female spirituals (51, nr. 14 in Table 1), for example, described *openness* as: "*[openness means that] there is more between heaven and earth (…) That you can open yourself to what is there, thus extend yourself, that is growth.*" This finding is in line with the characteristics of non-connected spirituals described by Kronjee and Lampert (2006).

Gender and virtue interpretations

As both male and female respondents participated in our study, we were able to explore whether there were indications for a relation between respondents' gender and their virtue interpretations. We found that female respondents mentioned the importance of loving oneself in their interpretations of *love*, regarded as a condition for being able to show love towards others and to accept love from others. A female Catholic respondent (58), for example, mentioned: "*I strongly believe that you can only love someone else if you feel love for yourself for who you are in the first place.*" Only one of the male respondents mentioned loving oneself in his description of love.

Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to explore how Dutch citizens with different religious and secular backgrounds interpret virtues, in order to investigate whether virtues could be useful to enhance bridging social capital within a culturally and religiously diverse society such as the Netherlands, and if so, which virtues would be most likely to do so. Therefore, we interviewed a group of 23 Dutch citizens with different religious and secular backgrounds about their interpretation of 18 virtues that appeared relevant to contemporary Dutch society (see Chapter 2). We aimed to investigate how respondents interpret these virtues, the relevance of these virtues to their daily lives, and to explore whether there are indications for relations between respondents' religious or secular background and their virtue interpretations. In addition, we looked whether respondents' gender was related to their interpretations of the virtues.

An important finding was that none of the 18 virtues were interpreted purely as yielding benefits to only oneself. This supports the idea that virtues can be a useful concept to enhance social capital, including bridging social capital. In addition, we found that most of the virtues were interpreted in highly similar ways. For only four of the 18 virtues (*love, respect, trust and openness*), distinct multiple interpretations emerged from the interviews. Some respondents mentioned various interpretations in their descriptions of these four virtues, whereas others mentioned only one. This indicates that there are differences between the respondents with regard to their interpretations of these virtues. We distinguished eight groups of virtues with closely related meanings, where some virtues belong to several groups because of their multiple interpretations.

From the eight virtue groups we identified, we consider two groups to be particularly applicable in enhancing bridging social capital. This is based on the way the virtues within these groups were interpreted, as well as their relevance to the

respondents in this study. The first group comprises the virtues referring to a non-condemning and understanding attitude towards others, which are *love* (interpreted as trying to see the good side of others), *respect* (interpreted as unconditional and/or achieved respect), *openness* (interpreted as being open towards others or both about oneself and towards others), *trust* (interpreted as interpersonal trust), and *tolerance*. We think these virtues are useful in strengthening bridging social capital in particular, because being non-condemning and understanding is important in interaction with people of other cultural and/or religious groups with (perceived) different ideas, values and preferences. Moreover, being non-condemning and understanding could promote equal treatment of ingroup and outgroup members by stressing the equality of all people. This is in line with the finding that these virtues were generally regarded as important towards all other people.

The second group consists of virtues referring to concern for others, which are *love* (interpreted as attention and compassion to others) and *helpfulness*. These virtues encourage being considerate of others, which is crucial for social relationships. Moreover, *helpfulness* was generally regarded as important towards all others, which indicates both ingroup and outgroup members, and, as a consequence, may strengthen bridging social capital. Note that the virtue *helpfulness* belongs to the virtue type *respect* identified in Chapter 2, but, based on the interpretations found in this study, it appears to show more overlap with *love* than with *respect*.

Most of the virtues that the two groups comprise have several interpretations. For the use of virtues in interventions, it seems of key importance that for those virtues the appropriate interpretations are promoted. For example, *respect* was defined as unconditional respect, achieved respect and status respect. Of these three interpretations, we consider both unconditional and achieved respect as referring to being non-condemning and understanding towards others. However, status respect refers to being compliant. As another example, *love* (interpreted as attention and compassion to others) was regarded as especially important with respect to closely related others, such as partners, relatives and friends. This interpretation of *love* makes it a virtue less likely to enhance bridging social capital. To be sure that the appropriate interpretation is used in interventions, it seems important to refrain from only mentioning the virtue. Instead, the interpretations of the virtues could be mentioned, as well as examples of expressing the virtues in behavior.

We only found weak relations between respondents' (non-)religious background and virtue interpretations. With regard to gender and virtue interpretations, we found only a weak relationship, too. However, because of the small number of respondents participating in this study, additional research among a larger sample is needed to further investigate these possible relationships.

Limitations and directions for future research

There are some limitations to our research. First of all, as mentioned above, the number of respondents participating was rather small. Second, we only interviewed higher educated people. Additional research should investigate whether the virtue interpretations found in this study are also common among a more representative sample of Dutch society. Third, based on the findings in this study, the question may arise why there are problems with regard to bridging social capital in the Netherlands, as the virtues that could positively contribute were regarded as highly relevant. Different results might be found in other samples, or the way people describe the virtues may not correspond with the way they express them in their actual behavior towards others. Future research should investigate the degree to which people display the virtues they regard as relevant in their behavior towards others, whether there is a difference between behavior towards ingroup and outgroup members, and how people can be encouraged to express certain virtues towards others, including outgroup members.

Conclusions

Despite its limitations, we think this study showed promising results regarding the possible positive contribution of virtues to bridging social capital within culturally and religiously diverse societies. Based on the way the virtues were interpreted and their relevance to the respondents, we think that particularly virtues referring to 'being non-condemning and understanding towards others' and 'concern for others' are useful concepts in enhancing bridging social capital in contemporary Dutch society.

CHAPTER 4
THE PURSUIT OF VIRTUES AND RELATIONS BETWEEN MUSLIM AND NON-MUSLIM DUTCH

Virtues may be useful instruments in strengthening bridging social capital in contemporary culturally and religiously diverse Western European societies. In order to be able to positively contribute to bridging social capital, they need to be shared by citizens from different cultural and/or religious groups within a society. In this way, citizens will be motivated to express these virtues in their behavior and they will appreciate these virtues being displayed by outgroup members. In Chapter 2, we investigated which virtues are relevant to Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch in order to find out whether virtues could be a useful concept in improving the relations between these groups in contemporary Dutch society, and if so, which virtues would be most useful. We obtained a set of 16 virtues. It is important to know whether Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch agree on the degree to which they pursue these virtues in their daily lives. Those virtues that both groups strongly pursue will be especially useful in improving their relations to one another. Therefore, the aim of the first part of the current study is to investigate the degree to which Muslims and non-Muslims (mainly Christians and secular people) in the Netherlands pursue the 16 virtues.

Another condition that needs to be met for virtues to be useful in enhancing bridging social capital is that they promote attitudes and behavior that are favorable for intergroup relations. That is why, in the second part of this study, we investigate possible relations between the pursuit of certain virtues and outgroup attitudes that are expected to positively contribute to intergroup relations. Previous studies in fact showed positive relations between the importance attached to certain virtues and positive intentions towards outgroup members (Reed & Aquino, 2003; Laham, Tam, Lalljee, Hewstone & Voci, 2010; Lalljee, Tam, Hewstone, Laham & Lee, 2009). According to Reed and Aquino (2003), the general importance of virtues to a person's identity may stress the connectedness of all people and, in this way, promote the willingness to help outgroup members and reduce the likelihood to harm them. Laham et al. (2010) found that a greater value attached to the virtue 'unconditional respect', which is defined as "a general attitude towards humans that involves an appreciation of autonomy, moral equality and integrity" (p.302), is related to more positive, and less negative intentions towards outgroup members. They argue that unconditional respect emphasizes the fundamental equality of all people, and, therefore, the value attached to this virtue may result in less intergroup negativity. Hence, both Laham et al. (2010) and Reed and Aquino (2003) propose that pursuing (certain) virtues may stress the connectedness of all people and, in this way, promote a positive stance towards outgroup members. This indicates that virtues could highlight a sort of common ingroup identity (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). Indeed, previous research showed that creating a common ingroup identity has positive outcomes for intergroup relations by reducing intergroup bias, such as ingroup favoritism and outgroup derogation (e.g., Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Guan et al., 2011; Riek, Mania, Gaertner, McDonald, & Lamoreaux, 2010).

Part 1: The pursuit of virtues among Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch

In part 1 of this study, we examine the degree to which Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch pursue the 16 virtues that were found to be relevant to contemporary Dutch society, and to what extent these groups agree on their pursuit of these virtues. In several studies on virtues respondents were asked to which degree a given set of virtues described them (Cawley, Johnson & Martin, 2000; De Raad & Van Oudenhoven, 2011; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Shryack, Steger, Krueger & Kallie, 2010). Because some respondents may tend to be too modest, we chose to ask to which degree respondents pursue the virtues. We believe this reflects their motivation to display the virtues. In order to distinguish virtues from values, we asked respondents about the degree to which they pursued to *possess* the virtues. In this way, we stressed that virtues concern traits.

For part 1, we aimed at including at least 45 participants of each of the main religious and non-religious groups in the Netherlands: secularists (44% of the Dutch population), Catholics (27%), Protestants (17%), and Muslims (5%) (Statistics Netherlands, 2009a, 2009b). To examine whether the 16 virtues could be summarized into fewer virtue dimensions, we factor-analyzed the scores reflecting respondents' pursuit of the virtues. Previous research on virtues revealed different numbers of virtue dimensions, which vary from one to six (De Raad & Van Oudenhoven, 2011; see Shryack, et al., 2010). Subsequently, we examined to what extent Muslims and non-Muslims agree on their pursuit of the virtue dimensions found in the factor analysis.

Part 2: The pursuit of virtues and outgroup attitudes

In part 2, among non-Muslim Dutch, we explored the relationship between the pursuit of the virtue dimensions as found in the factor analysis and attitudes of acceptance towards Muslims. Attitudes of acceptance were operationalized *as accepting the participation of Muslims in Dutch society while keeping their own cultural and religious identity*. The acceptance and recognition of different group identities is central to the concept of multiculturalism and previous studies show that endorsing multiculturalism is associated with positive outcomes for intergroup relations (Verkuyten, 2010; see also Sasaki & Vorauer, 2013, for a review). These studies measured the general acceptance of a diverse society, whereas we specifically focused on acceptance of the participation of Muslims. We expect that attitudes of acceptance towards Muslims positively contribute to favorable relations between Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch.

We expected that pursuing certain virtues would be positively related to attitudes of acceptance towards Muslims by reducing perceived symbolic threat due to the presence of Muslims in Dutch society. Symbolic threat is defined as the perceived

violation of ingroup beliefs, values, norms and morality due to the presence of an outgroup, which results in negative attitudes towards that specific outgroup (Riek, Mania & Gaertner, 2006; Stephan & Stephan, 1996, 2000; Stephan, Ybarra, Martinez, Schwarzwald & Tur-Kaspa, 1998). This threat seems to affect the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in the Netherlands (González, Verkuyten, Weesie & Poppe, 2008; Van der Noll, Poppe & Verkuyten, 2010). We think that pursuing certain virtues may reduce levels of perceived symbolic threat, because these virtues stress the connectedness of all people. As a consequence, the emphasis on intergroup differences in beliefs, values, norms, and morality may be reduced, and/or these differences may be perceived as less threatening. We do not expect that pursuing any and all virtues will help to reduce perceived symbolic threat, but only those that stress the equality of all people and/or refer to concern for others, such as *love*, *respect*, and *trust*, because these virtues, in particular, may stress the connectedness of all people. In line with previous studies (Tip et al., 2012; Verkuyten, 2009), we expect that lower levels of perceived symbolic threat will result in greater acceptance of the participation of Muslims in society.

Method

Respondents and procedure

For this study, 435 Dutch respondents filled in a questionnaire, 205 males and 229 females (one respondent did not indicate gender) with a mean age of 34.44 years (SD = 15.07, range 18-75 years). A digital version of the questionnaire was put on religious and social network forums and a paper version circulated in the researchers' network using the snow ball method. It was also distributed on a train in the Northern part of the Netherlands, and among students of a university of applied sciences in the Western part of the Netherlands (Rotterdam). Of the respondents, 155 indicated they were non-religious, 131 indicated they were Protestant, 55 Muslim, 46 Catholic, 18 spiritual, 9 Buddhist, 2 Jewish, and 19 respondents indicated they had an 'other' (not further specified) religious background. Compared to the spread of the main religious groups across Dutch society, the Protestants were over-represented (30% versus 17% in Dutch society) and the Catholics under-represented (11% versus 27%) in this sample (Statistics Netherlands, 2009b). Most respondents were highly educated: 74% had finished a bachelor or master degree, compared to 30% within the total Dutch population (Statistics Netherlands, 2011).

Measures

First, using two different scales, respondents were asked about their attitudes of acceptance towards Muslims in Dutch society and about their perceived symbolic threat due to the presence of Muslims. To measure attitudes of acceptance towards Muslims, we considered eight items, of which four items focused on the participation of Muslims in Dutch society and four items focused on allowing Muslims in the Netherlands to keep their own cultural and religious identity. An example of the first four items is "I am willing to work at an organization where Muslims and non-Muslims work together", and an example of the latter four items is "I think Muslims in the Netherlands should be allowed to live in line with the traditions and customs of their faith". The four items measuring perceived symbolic threat due to the presence of Muslims were based on the definition of symbolic threat and scales used in previous studies (González et al., 2008; Stephan, Ybarra & Bachman, 1999). An example of an item is "My norms and values are threatened by the presence of Muslims in the Netherlands". Respondents answered to the 12 items on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Additionally, respondents were asked other questions not relevant for the purpose of the present study, concerning the degree to which they perceived similarities between Muslims and non-Muslims and intergroup anxiety.

Second, we asked respondents to mark the 16 virtues on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 10 (*strongly*) according to the degree to which they pursued to possess that virtue. Third, biographical data (gender, age, level of education, religious background, and degree of religiosity) were asked for. Finally, questions about respondents' political preferences and style of attachment were asked. These questions are irrelevant for the aim of this study and will therefore not be discussed further.

With regard to the respondents recruited at the university of applied sciences, we knew in advance that Muslims would participate. Since it would be strange for Muslims to fill in the question concerning perceived symbolic threat due to their presence in society, this question was left out of the questionnaire. In the other samples, we explained in the debriefing at the end of the questionnaire why this question was in the questionnaire.

Analyses part 1

Factor analysis of the scores on the 16 virtues. To investigate the dimensions underlying the 16 virtues, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis using the program Factor (Lorenzo-Seva & Ferrando, 2006). The number of factors was assessed using a parallel analysis with 95% threshold based on principal component analyses (Horn, 1965). A parallel analysis is recommended for statis-

tically assessing the number of factors underlying a dataset (O'Connor, 2000; Timmerman & Lorenzo-Seva, 2011). In this analysis, eigenvalues are extracted from random data sets parallel to the actual data set regarding the number of cases and variables. The eigenvalues from the actual data set are then compared with the distribution of the eigenvalues of the random data sets. A factor is retained if the eigenvalue exceeds 95% of the distribution of random eigenvalues. The factor loadings, obtained using a minimum common factor analysis (Ten Berge & Kiers, 1991), were obliquely rotated using the Promin criterion. We chose for oblique rotation, because we expected the interpretable factors to be correlated. Analyses were performed with the program Factor (Lorenzo-Seva & Ferrando, 2006).

The pursuit of virtues among Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch. All analyses were performed with SPSS (IBM SPSS Statistics version 20, 2011), unless indicated differently. To assess the pursuit of virtues among Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch, we calculated a scale score for each factor found in the factor analysis as the unweighted mean of the scores on the virtues that appeared to be substantially associated with the factor. First, any differences in the pursuit of the different virtue scales within individuals, possibly between the Muslims and non-Muslims, were examined by conducting a Repeated Measures MANOVA with the scores on the virtue scales as the dependent variables and group membership (Muslims versus non-Muslim) as the independent variable. In this way, we examined the extent to which the scores on the virtue scales showed a similar pattern among the Muslims and non-Muslim respondents.

Second, we conducted a MANOVA, again with scores on the virtue scales as the dependent variables and group membership (Muslims versus non-Muslim) as the independent variable, in order to assess possible differences between the two groups regarding their absolute scores on the virtue scales. In case of significant differences, follow-up ANOVA's were conducted to examine for which virtue scales differences were found between the two groups; we corrected for multiple hypothesis testing using Holm-Bonferroni (Holm, 1979), with the overall alpha set at .05. In case of significant differences between Muslims versus non-Muslims, we explored the differences between the main religious and secular groups (i.e., Muslims, Catholics, Protestants and secular respondents) on the basis of the associated sample means and confidence intervals.

Analyses part 2

Relations between the pursuit of virtues, perceived symbolic threat and attitudes of acceptance towards Muslims among non-Muslim Dutch. For this part of the study, we selected non-Islamic respondents. With regard to the items considered to measure attitudes of acceptance, in hindsight, we consider three of the eight items not being useful. Two of them are rather vaguely formulated and, therefore, multi-interpretable ('I think Muslims in the Netherlands should behave like Dutch citizens', what means behaving like Dutch citizens?; and 'I think the presence of Muslims and non-Muslims in the Netherlands yields negative consequences to Dutch society', these negative consequences could be caused by Muslims as well as non-Muslims). The other item seems to be measuring intergroup anxiety rather than attitudes of acceptance ('I have problems with the large number of Muslims living in the Netherlands'). Therefore, we decided to not further consider these three items for the scale. To assess the psychometric properties of the remaining nine items used to measure perceived symbolic threat and attitudes of acceptance (see the Appendix for these nine items), we conducted an exploratory factor analysis based on polychoric correlations (because of the skewed distribution of the item scores) to examine whether the nine items belonged to two empirically distinct constructs. Again, the factor loadings were obtained using a minimum rank common factor analysis (Ten Berge & Kiers, 1991), and obliquely rotated using the Promin criterion.

We calculated the pairwise correlations between the pursuit of the virtue dimensions as found in the factor analysis, perceived symbolic threat and attitudes of acceptance. Next, we conducted regression analyses in order to examine our hypotheses that the pursuit of certain virtues would result in a greater acceptance towards Muslims via reducing perceived symbolic threat due to the presence of Muslims. To test the significance of the expected indirect effects of the pursuit of certain virtues, we considered for the effects of interest the 95% confidence intervals (CIs), obtained from a bootstrap analysis using bias corrected CIs. For this analysis, we used the SPSS macro developed by Preacher and Hayes (2008). In all analyses, we controlled for possible effects of educational level on perceived symbolic threat and attitudes of acceptance, because previous studies showed positive relations between educational level and a more positive stance towards outgroup members (e.g., Breugelmans & Van de Vijver, 2004; Verkuyten, 2009). This way, we examined what the pursuit of certain virtues adds, over educational level, to the explained variance in perceived symbolic threat and attitudes of acceptance.

Results

Part 1

In Table 1, the demographic characteristics of the 414 respondents (out of 435) that provided valid data on the 16 virtues are shown. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the scores of these respondents on the 16 virtues (scale from 1-10). As Table 2 shows, all virtues were ranked on average as highly pursued (with means ranging between 6.69 and 8.73). Respondents, both Muslims and non-Muslims, most pursued *love, honesty* and *respect*, and least pursued *obedience*.

Table 1. *Demographic characteristics of the respondents participating in part 1 (n = 414)*

	Total	**Muslims**	**Non-Muslims**
Total respondents (*n*)	414	48	365
Gender (percentage)			
males	46%	46%	46%
Females	54%	54%	54%
Age (Mean (*SD*))			
Age	34.67 (15.62)	28.13 (10.30)	35.56 (15.34)
Level of education (percentage)			
Lower vocational education	7%	6%	7%
Secondary vocational education	13%	11%	13%
Higher general secondary education	3%	2%	3%
Pre-university education	2%	4%	2%
Bachelor	46%	54%	45%
Master	28%	21%	29%
Other	1%	2%	1%

Note. One respondent did not indicate his or her religious background

Table 2. *Summary statistics of the scores on the 16 virtues for Muslim and non-Muslim respondents (scale 1-10)*

	Total (*n* = **414**)		**Muslims** (*n* =**48**)		**Non-Muslims** (*n* = **365**)	
Virtues	**Mean** (*SD*)	**Range**	**Mean**(*SD*)	**Range**	**Mean** (*SD*)	**Range**
Love	8.73 (1.23)	1-10	9.02 (1.04)	7-10	8.68 (1.25)	1-10
Honesty	8.61 (1.17)	3-10	9.08 (.92)	7-10	8.56 (1.18)	3-10
Respect	8.60 (1.34)	1-10	9.10 (.91)	6-10	8.53 (1.33)	1-10
Responsibility	8.34 (1.93)	4-10	8.58 (1.07)	5-10	8.31 (1.20)	4-10
Decency	8.24 (1.27)	2-10	8.48 (1.29)	5-10	8.23 (1.26)	2-10
Wisdom	8.23 (1.28)	4-10	8.67 (1.14)	7-10	8.15 (1.28)	4-10
Trust	8.23 (1.32)	1-10	8.60 (1.13)	6-10	8.17 (1.34)	1-10
Joy	8.17 (1.49)	1-10	8.77 (1.06)	7-10	8.10 (1.51)	1-10
Self-sufficiency	8.16 (1.26)	3-10	8.29 (1.22)	5-10	8.14 (1.27)	3-10
Self-confidence	8.03 (1.31)	1-10	8.29 (1.22)	5-10	7.99 (1.33)	1-10
Openness	7.86 (1.41)	1-10	8.29 (1.24)	6-10	7.80 (1.42)	1-10
Self-control	7.83 (1.43)	2-10	8.19 (1.23)	5-10	7.78 (1.45)	2-10
Courage	7.79 (1.32)	3-10	8.25 (1.33)	5-10	7.72 (1.29)	3-10
Hope	7.72 (1.65)	1-10	8.23 (1.55)	5-10	7.64 (1.62)	1-10
Patience	7.59 (1.50)	2-10	8.08 (1.29)	6-10	7.53 (1.48)	2-10
Obedience	6.69 (1.84)	1-10	7.08 (1.76)	2-10	6.61 (1.84)	1-10

Note. One respondent did not indicate his or her religious background

Factor analyses of the scores on the 16 virtues. The parallel analysis indicated three factors, explaining 77% of the common variance. The pattern matrix (after Promin rotation) is shown in Table 3. The inter-factor correlations are .35 between Factor 1 and 2; .51 between Factor 1 and 3; and .49 between Factor 2 and 3. These correlations indicate that a general pursuit of virtues can be identified, but within that, three factors can be distinguished.

We consider the three factor solution to be well-interpretable. As can be seen in Table 3, the first factor mainly pertains to virtues that refer to controlling one's impulses and complying with the norms and rules valid within a context. Therefore, we labeled this factor the *normative* virtues. The second factor mainly concerns virtues that refer to being sensible and self-supportive. We labeled this factor the *rational* virtues. The third factor mainly pertains to virtues that are related to concern for others, being non-condemning and understanding towards others, and to optimism. Therefore, we labeled this factor the *self-transcendent* virtues. Two of the 16 virtues, *self-sufficiency* and *responsibility*, were weakly associated with all factors, indicating that these virtues are hardly related to the normative, rational and self-transcendent virtues. For each of the three distinguished virtue factors, we calculated a scale score as an unweighted mean of the scores on the virtues substantially associated with the factor (taking as a threshold the associ-

ated element of the pattern matrix >.30). Coefficient alphas of the three resulting scales were reasonable (α = .74 for the normative, α = .71 for the rational, and α = .84 for the self-transcendent virtue scale).

Table 3. *Pattern matrix of the 3 factor solution and explained common variance of each virtue (total common variance explained is 77%)*

Virtues	**Factor 1 Normative**	**Factor 2 Rational**	**Factor 3 Self-transcendent**	**Common variance**
Obedience	**.75**	-.26	.13	.66
Self-control	**.73**	.14	-.17	.59
Patience	**.58**	.10	.09	.57
Decency	**.51**	.27	.03	.56
Wisdom	.05	**.87**	-.15	.82
Self-Confidence	-.08	**.72**	.10	.76
Courage	.13	**.39**	.24	.48
Joy	-.23	.08	**.80**	.72
Love	-.11	.08	**.78**	.67
Openness	-.10	-.03	**.70**	.53
Trust	.19	-.06	**.62**	.59
Respect	.24	.03	**.55**	.52
Hope	.08	.06	**.53**	.52
Honesty	.23	.09	**.52**	.80
Self-sufficiency	.15	.26	.23	.44
Responsibility	.28	.23	.18	.44

Note. Elements of the Pattern matrix >.30 in absolute value are marked in boldface

Differences between Muslims and non-Muslims regarding the pursuit of virtues. In Table 4, the means and standard deviations of the scores on the three virtue scales for Muslims and non-Muslims are shown (one respondent did not indicate his/her religious background). The Repeated Measures MANOVA showed no significant interaction between the scale scores and group membership (F (2,410) = .20, p = .816, partial η^2 = .00), suggesting that the pattern of the mean scores on the three scales does not differ between the Muslims and non-Muslims. We found a significant main effect of virtue scales, suggesting differences between the mean scores on the three scales (F (2,410) = 39.87, p <.001, partial η^2 = .16). As Table 4 shows, across the two groups, the self-transcendent virtues were pursued the most (95% CI: 8.18-8.37), followed by the rational virtues (95% CI: 7.91-8.11), and the normative virtues (95% CI: 7.47-7.69). Those scores differ significantly between all pairs of scales (p <.01 for all comparisons), also after adjusting for multiple comparisons with Holm-Bonferroni correction (Holm, 1979).

A MANOVA revealed significant differences between the groups in means on the three virtue scales (F (3,409) = 4.75, p =.003, η^2 = .03). Follow-up ANOVA's showed significant differences between the two groups on all three scales (F (1,411) = 6.00, p =.015, η^2 =.01 for the normative; F (1,411) = 8.28, p =.004, η^2 =.02 for the rational; F (1,411) = 12.30, p =.001, η^2 =.03 for the self-transcendent virtue scale), which also differ significantly with Holm-Bonferroni correction (Holm, 1979). As Table 4 shows, Muslims scored higher on all three scales compared to the other main religious and non-religious groups in the Netherlands (Protestants, Catholics, and secular respondents). Secular respondents appeared to differ most from the Muslims, except for the scores on the rational virtues, where both secularists and Protestants scored relatively low (see Table 4).

Table 4. *Summary statistics of the scores on the normative, rational, and self-transcendent virtue scales for Muslims and non-Muslims*

		Normative virtues			Rational virtues			Self-transcendent virtues		
	n	Mean	*SD*	95% CI	Mean	*SD*	95% CI	Mean	*SD*	95% CI
Religion:										
Muslims	48	7.96	1.17	7.62-8.30	8.40	1.07	8.09-8.71	8.73	.75	8.51-8.95
Non-Muslims	365	7.53	1.12	7.42-7.65	7.95	1.01	7.85-8.06	8.21	.98	8.11-8.31
Protestants	127	7.75	1.03	7.57-7.93	7.85	.99	7.67-8.02	8.28	.98	8.10-8.45
Catholics	44	7.69	1.07	7.37-8.02	7.98	1.06	7.66-8.31	8.32	.81	8.07-8.56
Secularists	150	7.26	1.12	7.08-7.44	7.88	.98	7.73-8.05	8.05	1.03	7.88-8.21
Other	44	7.69	1.27	7.31-8.08	8.45	1.02	8.14-8.76	8.49	.96	8.20-8.78
Total	413	7.58	1.33	7.47-7.69	8.01	1.03	7.91-8.11	8.27	.97	8.18-8.37

Note. The other group consists of Spiritual (n = 17), Buddhist (n =7), Jewish (n = 2), and respondents with an 'other' (not further specified) religious background (n = 18)

Part 2

Of the 380 non-Muslim respondents, 311 provided valid data concerning scores on the three virtue scales, perceived symbolic threat, and attitudes of acceptance. The demographic characteristics of this group are shown in Table 5. Of the 311 respondents, 130 indicated they were non-religious background, 111 indicated they were Protestant, 32 Catholic, 13 spiritual, 7 Buddhist, 2 Jewish, and 16 indicated they had an 'other' (not further specified) religious background.

Factor analyses of the scores on the scales measuring attitudes of acceptance and perceived symbolic threat. The parallel analysis of the scores on the nine items measuring attitudes of acceptance towards Muslims and perceived symbolic threat due to the presence of Muslims in Dutch society indicated one factor. Asking for a two factor solution, the pattern matrix obtained from the minimum rank common factor analysis (after Promin rotation) revealed that the items measuring attitudes of acceptance and the items measuring perceived symbolic threat were related to different factors. The two factors explained 82% of the common variance. Despite the results of the parallel analysis, we decided to retain two factors, as we think that the items of the two scales refer to related, but different concepts. The correlation between the two factors is -.65, which implies a strong relation, but not two completely overlapping factors. The reliability of the scale measuring attitudes of acceptance towards Muslims was sufficient (α = .72),

and of the scale measuring perceived symbolic threat was good (α = .83).

Table 5. *Demographic characteristics of the respondents participating in part 2 (n = 311)*

	Total
Gender (percentage)	
males	45%
Females	55%
Age (Mean (*SD*))	
Age	35.97 (15.26)
Level of education (percentage)	
Lower vocational education	8%
Secondary vocational education	13%
Higher general secondary education	3%
Pre-university education	2%
Bachelor	42%
Master	31%
other	1%
Total respondents	311

Relations between the pursuit of virtues, perceived symbolic threat and attitudes of acceptance towards Muslims among non-Muslim Dutch. Descriptive statistics of, and correlations among the variables studied are shown in Table 6. Pursuing self-transcendent virtues appeared to be positively related to attitudes of acceptance (r = .13, p = .023), and negatively related to perceived symbolic threat (r = -.17, p = .002). We also found a negative relation between the pursuit of rational virtues and perceived symbolic threat (r = -.12, p = .034), and a positive relation between the pursuit of normative virtues and perceived symbolic threat (r = .13, p = .025).

Table 6. *Descriptive Statistics and correlations between the studied variables*

	n	M	*SD*	95% CI	SV	NV	RV	AA	ST
Self-transcendent virtues (SV)	311	8.24	.97	8.13-8.35					
Normative virtues (NV)	311	7.57	1.10	7.44-7.69	.46**				
Rational virtues (RV)	311	7.95	1.02	7.84-8.06	.52**	.32**			
Attitudes of acceptance (AA)	311	3.77	.67	3.70-3.86	.13*	-.09	.08		
Symbolic Threat (ST)	311	2.24	.88	2.14-2.33	-.17**	.13*	-.12*	-.54**	
Level of education (range 1-6)	308	4.50	1.65	4.32-4.68	-.01	-.15**	.11	.26**	-.16**

Note. $^{**}p \leq .01$, $^{*}p \leq .05$

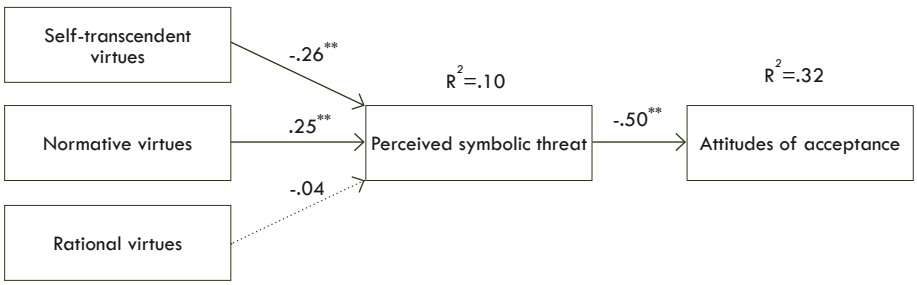
First, we tested whether scores on the three virtue scales predicted perceived symbolic threat, controlling for educational level. We conducted a hierarchical regression analysis in which educational level was entered as predictor in step 1, and in step 2 the three virtue scales were added as predictors. The regression model in step 1 appeared to be significant (R^2 = .03, F (1,306) = 7.98, p =.005). Educational level appeared to be a significant negative predictor of perceived symbolic threat ($beta_{el}$ = -.16, t = -2.82, p =.005, where beta indicates an estimated standardized regression coefficient). Adding the three virtue scales significantly increased the explained variance in perceived symbolic threat (R^2_{change} = .08, F_{change} (3,303) = 8.70, p <.001). Scores on the self-transcendent virtues appeared to be a significant negative predictor ($beta_{sv}$ = -.26, t = -3.82, p <.001), whereas scores on the normative virtues appeared to be a significant positive predictor ($beta_{nv}$ = .25, t = 4.08, p <.001), and scores on the rational virtues appeared not to be a significant predictor of perceived symbolic threat ($beta_{rv}$= -.04, t = -.65, p =.516). Educational level still appeared to be a significant negative predictor ($beta_{el}$ = -.12, t = -2.15, p =.032).

Second, in order to test our hypothesis that the pursuit of virtues predicts attitudes of acceptance via perceived symbolic threat, we conducted another hierarchical regression analysis with attitudes of acceptance as the dependent variable. In step 1, educational level was entered as predictor; in step 2, the three virtues scales were entered, and in step 3, perceived symbolic threat was entered. The model in step 1 appeared to be significant (R^2 = .07, F (1,306) = 21.25 , p <.001). Educational level appeared to be a significant positive predictor of attitudes of acceptance ($beta_{el}$ = .26, t = 4.61, p <.001, where beta indicates an estimated standardized regression coefficient). Adding the three virtue scales significantly increased the explained variance in attitudes of acceptance (R^2_{change} = .03, F_{change} (3,303) = 3.80, p = .011). The self-transcendent virtues appeared a significant positive predictor ($beta_{sv}$ = .20, t = 2.88, p =.004), and the normative

virtues a significant negative predictor ($beta_{nv}$ = -.15, t = -2.44, p =.015), and again the pursuit of rational virtues appeared not to be a significant predictor of attitudes of acceptance ($beta_{rv}$ = .00, t = -.07, p =.945). Educational level still appeared to be a significant positive predictor ($beta_{el}$ = .24, t = 4.20, p <.001). After adding perceived symbolic threat, the explained variance in attitudes of acceptance increased significantly (R^2_{change} = .22, F_{change} (1,302) = 98.25, p <.001). Perceived symbolic threat appeared to be a significant negative predictor of attitudes of acceptance ($beta_{st}$ = -.50, t = -9.91, p <.001). Both the relation between the pursuit of self-transcendent virtues and attitudes of acceptance, and the relation between the pursuit of normative virtues and attitudes of acceptance dropped to non-significant ($beta_{sv}$ = .07., t = 1.11, p =.271, and $beta_{nv}$ = -.03, t = -.47, p =.639, respectively). The relation between rational virtues and attitudes of acceptance hardly changed ($beta_{rv}$= -.03, t = -.45, p =.654) and educational level became a weaker, but still significant positive predictor ($beta_{el}$ = .18, t = -3.58, p =<.001).

The indirect effect of the pursuit of self-transcendent virtues on attitudes of acceptance via perceived symbolic threat differed significantly from 0 (95% CI = .029 - .114). The same applies to the indirect effect of the pursuit of normative virtues (95% CI –.091 - –.003). These findings indicate that perceived symbolic threat mediates the relation between the pursuit of self-transcendent virtues and of normative virtues and attitudes of acceptance. The mediation model is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. *The relationships between the pursuit of virtues, perceived symbolic threat, and attitudes of acceptance, controlled for educational level. Estimated standardized regression coefficients are shown, where ** means p ≤.001, * means p ≤.01*



Note. Educational level is left out of the figure to improve clarity

Discussion

The first aim of this study was to investigate whether Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch agree on the virtues they pursue. We used a set of 16 virtues relevant to contemporary Dutch society that had to be rated by Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch. Analysis of the dimensions underlying the 16 virtues revealed three virtue dimensions: a normative, a rational and a self-transcendent virtue dimension. This is in accordance with a study on virtues conducted by Shryack et al. (2010), who distinguished an intellectual, interpersonal and temperance dimension, which are comparable with the rational, self-transcendent and normative dimension, respectively. The normative, self-transcendent and rational themes occurred in the studies conducted by Cawley et al. (2000) and De Raad and Van Oudenhoven (2011) as well.

Muslims pursue to possess all three kinds of virtues more strongly than non-Muslims do. This finding may indicate that virtues are more centrally positioned in the lives of Muslims and/or that there is a stronger tendency for social desirability within this group. The largest differences are found between the Muslims and secular respondents. This is in line with the idea that religion emphasizes morality and offers motivations for moral conduct (e.g., Rossano, 2008; Vitell et al., 2009; Walker & Pitts, 1998). Though differences were found in the extent to which the virtues were pursued, the order among the scores on the three virtue dimensions appeared to be the same for Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch. The finding that both groups pursue self-transcendent virtues most is in accordance with previous research that showed that particularly virtues that explicitly refer to doing what is right in relation to others are regarded as important across different cultural and religious groups (e.g., Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2006; Smith, Smith & Christopher, 2007; Van Oudenhoven, de Raad, Carmona, Helbig & Van der Linden, 2012). The normative virtues were pursued least among both Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch.

Among non-Muslims, we expected that in particular pursuing virtues that stress the equality of all people and concern for others would reduce perceived symbolic threat due to the presence of Muslims and, in this way, would promote attitudes of acceptance towards Muslims. Indeed, pursuing self-transcendent virtues appeared to be negatively related to perceived symbolic threat and, in this way, positively related to a stronger acceptance towards Muslims. The self-transcendent virtues include virtues that stress equality and concern for others (e.g., *respect* and *love*). However, the self-transcendent virtues also include virtues that refer to an optimistic attitude to life (e.g., *joy* and *hope*). Pursuing these kinds of virtues may be negatively related to perceived symbolic threat as well, by encouraging people to focus on the positive side of a diverse society instead of its threats and possible drawbacks.

Not all virtues appear to be useful in enhancing bridging social capital. Pursuing normative virtues was positively related to perceived symbolic threat due to the

presence of Muslims, and, in this way, associated with less attitudes of acceptance towards their presence in society. Normative virtues refer to adapting to the norms, values and rules valid within a certain context. Non-Muslims pursuing these virtues may feel more threatened by the presence of Muslims with (perceived) different norms, values and rules and, as a consequence, be less accepting of their presence in society. Strongly pursuing normative virtues may be related to Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA), which is composed of, amongst others, a strong tendency to support societal norms and conventions and to obey the established authorities (Altemeyer, 1996, 1998). Previous research did indeed show a positive relation between RWA and perceptions of outgroup members as a threat, including symbolic threat (Charles-Toussaint & Crowson, 2010; Verkuyten, 2009).

No evidence was found for relations between perceived symbolic threat, attitudes of acceptance, and the pursuit of rational virtues. Hence, this research showed potential for some, but not all virtues to offer a positive contribution to bridging social capital in culturally and religiously diverse societies.

Limitations

One limitation of this study is that we do not know whether the factor structure we found underlying the 16 virtues applies equally to Muslims and non-Muslims. The group of Muslims was too small to make this comparison. Moreover, it should be taken into account that the findings may not hold for all Muslims in the Netherlands. The Muslims participating in the first part of this study belong to a group that is fluent in Dutch and actively participates in Dutch society. Future research among a more diverse group is necessary to corroborate our findings.

With regard to the second part of this study, an important limitation is that we are unable to draw conclusions regarding the causal relations between the pursuit of virtues, perceived symbolic threat, and attitudes of acceptance. It could be that attitudes of acceptance towards Muslims reduce perceived symbolic threat due to their presence in society. In addition, perceived symbolic threat may result in pursuing certain virtues. For example, it could be that higher levels of perceived symbolic threat result in greater adherence to norms and rules that are valid within society and, consequently, result in a stronger pursuit of normative virtues. Moreover, given the relatively small amount of explained variance of perceived symbolic threat by the virtue scores, it appears useful to take other psychological mechanisms into account as well. For instance, in previous research, intergroup contact and ingroup identification were identified as relevant factors (González, et al., 2008; Van der Noll, et al., 2010; Verkuyten, 2005, 2009).

Another limitation with regard to the second part of this study is that we focused on attitudes of acceptance towards Muslims, and did not examine actual behavior. Although we expect these attitudes to positively contribute to bridging social

capital, for virtues to be useful in enhancing bridging social capital it is essential that they encourage people to act in ways that promote intergroup relations. Furthermore, because of the relatively high level of education within our sample, our results cannot be generalized to all non-Muslims in the Netherlands. In line with previous work (e.g., Breugelmans & Van de Vijver, 2004; Verkuyten, 2009), we found a positive relation between educational level and greater attitudes of acceptance towards Muslims. Moreover, there may be a selection bias (people willing to participate in the study may be more accepting towards Muslims and/or having a preference for specific virtues). Finally, the use of self-report questionnaires may have evoked socially desirable answers.

Conclusion and directions for future research

Despite its limitations, this research showed some promising results with regard to the usefulness of self-transcendent virtues in enhancing bridging social capital. More so, it provided an interesting agenda for future research. First, we found that Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch share a preference for self-transcendent virtues. Among non-Muslims, stressing this resemblance in pursuing these virtues may reduce perceived symbolic threat due to the presence of Muslims in society, by reducing perceived differences in beliefs, values and morality between these groups. Research conducted by Zárate, Garcia, Garza and Hitlan (2004) did indeed show that identifying similarities between the ingroup and an outgroup with regard to interpersonal traits, which all referred to virtues (e.g., kindness, love), resulted in less prejudice towards an outgroup. According to Zárate and colleagues, the identification of these similarities may reduce perceived symbolic threat posed by the outgroup, which results in less prejudice.

Second, it needs to be tested whether the promotion of the pursuit of self-transcendent virtues does in fact result in attitudes and behavior that positively influence the relations between Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch. Future studies should be conducted among a more heterogeneous group with regard to level of education. If these studies do show potential for self-transcendent virtues to be useful in enhancing bridging social capital, the value of these virtues could be stressed in interventions, for example in educational programs, team meetings in diverse organizations, and local politics. The fact that virtues can be acquired and developed makes them applicable concepts for interventions. Moreover, large groups of people could be reached, because in general, people appear to regard the self-transcendent virtues as highly worth pursuing.

Appendix

Scale 'attitudes of acceptance towards Muslims'

To what extent do you agree with the statements below:

	Strongly disagree				*Strongly agree*
I think that Muslims in the Netherlands should be allowed to live in line with the traditions and customs of their faith.	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
I think Muslims and non-Muslims can live together well.	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
At home, I think Muslims in the Netherlands should be allowed to speak their native language.	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
I am willing to work at an organization where Muslims and non-Muslims work together.	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
I think Muslims in the Netherlands should distance themselves from their Islamic customs and traditions. *	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*

Scale 'perceived symbolic threat due to the presence of Muslims'

To what extent do you agree with the statements below:

	Strongly disagree				*Strongly agree*
My norms and values are threatened by the presence of Muslims in the Netherlands.	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
I perceive Muslims as a threat to my own philosophy of life.	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
I am afraid that my beliefs are incompatible with that of Muslims.	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
I feel threated with regard to my beliefs due to the presence of Muslims in the Netherlands.	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*

Note. All items are translated from the Dutch, items are negatively formulated*

CHAPTER 5
VIRTUE INTERPRETATIONS AND RELATIONS BETWEEN MUSLIM AND NON-MUSLIM DUTCH

Virtues may offer a positive contribution to bridging social capital in culturally and religiously diverse societies. In the present study, we focus on the potential of specific virtues to improve the relations between Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch. In a previous study among religious and secular groups in the Netherlands, including Muslims, we found a set of 16 virtues that are relevant to these groups in contemporary Dutch society (Chapter 2). Moreover, Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch largely seem to agree on the degree to which they regard these virtues as worth pursuing (Chapter 4). However, in order to be useful in improving intergroup relations, virtues should also be interpreted in a way that positively contributes to intergroup relations. In our qualitative study (Chapter 3), we found that Dutch citizens gave various interpretations of some of the virtues. These interpretations seem to differ in the degree to which they promote attitudes and behavior that can enhance bridging social capital. The virtues for which various interpretations were given are *respect, openness, love* and *trust*. In the present study, we investigate how Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch interpret these four virtues and to what extent both groups agree on their interpretations. This is the aim of the first part of the present study.

Another obvious prerequisite for virtues to be useful instruments in strengthening bridging social capital is that pursuing these virtues will indeed result in attitudes and behavior that positively affect intergroup relations. For *respect, openness, love* and *trust*, this may thus depend on the way these virtues are interpreted. All four can be interpreted as referring to being non-condemning and understanding towards others (Chapter 3). We consider especially this interpretation to offer a positive contribution to bridging social capital. In interacting with people who have a different cultural and religious identity, people will be confronted with different ideas, values and preferences. Being non-condemning and understanding in these interactions will reduce the chances for intergroup conflict and, in this way, improve intergroup relations. The aim of the second part of the present study is to investigate whether the extent to which non-Muslims pursue *respect, openness, love* and *trust*, and the degree to which they interpret these four virtues as referring to being non-condemning and understanding towards others is indeed related to intentions to act in a non-condemning and understanding way towards Muslims with a different point of view. In the remainder of this chapter we refer to these intentions as non-condemning intentions.

Part 1: Virtue interpretations

The virtues *respect, openness, love* and *trust* appeared to be interpreted in several ways in the qualitative study (Chapter 3). For *respect*, we found three interpretations: *unconditional respect*, which refers to being unprejudiced, understanding, and considerate of all others; *achieved respect*, which implies admiring someone for the kind of person he/she is or for what he/she did; and *status respect*, which refers to

being modest in the proximity of a person of higher status. These three interpretations of respect are similar to the ones described in previous work (see Lalljee, Tam, Hewstone, Laham & Lee, 2009). For *openness*, we found two interpretations: *being open towards others*, in the sense of being unprejudiced, interested and understanding, and *being open about oneself*, which means expressing one's thoughts and feelings. With regard to *love*, we again found two interpretations: *compassion and attention to others* and *seeing the good side of others*. Regarding the first interpretation of *love*, some of the respondents in our qualitative study referred to 'others' as closely related others, such as partners, relatives and friends, whereas other respondents referred to all others, including familiar and unfamiliar people. Therefore, we identified three interpretations of *love* in the present study, which are *compassion and attention to all others*, *compassion and attention to closely related others*, and *seeing the good side of others*. For *trust*, we found two interpretations in our qualitative study: *interpersonal trust*, which refers to believing that other people want the best for you, and *an optimistic attitude to life*.

Previous studies identified indications of similarities regarding the importance attached to virtues across different religious and secular groups in the Netherlands, including Muslims (Chapter 2 and Chapter 4; Van Oudenhoven, De Raad, Carmona, Helbig & Van der Linden, 2012). However, as they did not investigate possible differences in virtue interpretations among these groups, it cannot be ruled out that the similarities that were observed in fact referred to different meanings. Therefore, the first part of this study examines the way Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch (mainly Christian and secular people) interpret *respect, openness, love* and *trust* and to what extent these groups agree on their interpretations.

Part 2: Virtue interpretations and non-condemning intentions towards others

Part 2 investigates the relations among non-Muslim Dutch respondents between the pursuit of *respect, openness, love* and *trust*, the degree of agreement with the virtue interpretations that refer to being non-condemning and understanding towards others, and their actual non-condemning intentions towards Muslims as compared to non-outgroup members. By making this comparison we can examine the usefulness of virtues in improving the relations between Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch: If pursuing certain virtues and agreement with specific virtue interpretations are exclusively related to non-condemning intentions towards a non-outgroup member, these virtues will not offer a positive contribution.

Non-condemning intentions towards others. We measured non-condemning intentions with the use of a scenario in which people are confronted with a person who expresses a different point of view. To make a comparison

between non-condemning intentions towards Muslims (outgroup members) on the one hand, and non-condemning intentions towards non-outgroup members on the other hand, we wrote two conditions. In the non-outgroup condition, no background information was given about the person in the scenario, whereas in the outgroup condition the background information was explicitly mentioned. Respondents were randomly assigned to either the outgroup or the non-outgroup condition. We deliberately chose not to have each respondent in both conditions to reduce the chance of socially desirable answers.

We expected there to be differences between the degree of non-condemning intentions expressed in the outgroup condition versus the non-outgroup condition. Following self-categorization theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Whetherell, 1987), people have the natural tendency to perceive an outgroup as being different. Therefore, a different viewpoint from an outgroup member may be expected and, subsequently, be more likely to be accepted. In the case of the non-outgroup condition, no clear information was provided about whether the other person in the scenario is an outgroup member or not. In this case, people have the natural tendency to infer similarity between themselves and the other, which is referred to as social projection (Robbins & Krueger, 2005). Consequently, a different viewpoint from the person in the non-outgroup condition may be unexpected and, therefore, less accepted than the different viewpoint of the person in the outgroup condition. In line with this reasoning, social projection is stronger when judgments are made about ingroup members compared to outgroup members (Cadinu & Rothbart, 1996; Otten & Wentura, 2001; Robbins & Krueger, 2005). Overall, we expect that when an outgroup member expresses a different viewpoint this is accepted more easily than when a non-outgroup member expresses a different viewpoint.

The role of virtue interpretations. We expected that non-condemning intentions from non-Muslims towards either Muslims or non-outgroup members are related to pursuing the virtues *respect, openness, love* and *trust*, and to agreeing with the interpretations of these virtues that refer to being non-condemning and understanding towards others, including unfamiliar others. We will now discuss for each virtue whether we think that the different interpretations relate to being non-condemning and understanding towards unfamiliar others.

For *respect*, we only consider *unconditional respect* to refer to being non-condemning and understanding towards others, including unfamiliar others (Chapter 3). *Achieved respect* implies admiring someone for the kind of person he/she is or for what he/she did. Because one has to know the other person, or to know something about this person, it does not refer to being non-condemning and understanding towards unfamiliar others. To our opinion, *status respect* does not refer to being non-condemning and understanding. For *openness*, the interpretation

as *being open towards others* refers to being non-condemning and understanding towards others, including unfamiliar others. This does not apply to *being open about oneself*. For *love*, the interpretation as *seeing the good side of others* refers to being non-condemning and understanding towards others, including unfamiliar others. In our view, the other two interpretations of *love*, *compassion and attention to all others,* and *compassion and attention to closely related others*, have more to do with concern for others than with being non-condemning and understanding. For *trust*, *interpersonal trust* refers to a positive view of others and, in this way, to being non-condemning and understanding towards others, including unfamiliar others. This applies less to *trust* described as *an optimistic attitude to life,* since an optimistic attitude to life does not necessarily involve other people.

For each of the four virtues, we expected a positive interaction effect between the pursuit of the virtue in question and the agreement with its interpretation that refers to being non-condemning and understanding towards unfamiliar others on non-condemning intentions. In contrast, we did not expect to note any relations between agreement with the other virtue interpretations and non-condemning intentions. With regard to the two different conditions (outgroup (Muslim) and non-outgroup), we expected no differences regarding the strength and direction of the effects of the pursuit of the virtues and agreement with the specific virtue interpretations on non-condemning intentions. The virtue interpretations concerned refer to a general non-condemning and understanding attitude towards others, which may include outgroup as well as non-outgroup members. If the strength and direction do differ between the two conditions, with less favorable effects for the outgroup condition, this would suggest that the virtue concerned is not suitable as a basis for improving relations between Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch.

Method

Respondents and procedure

In this study, 284 Dutch respondents participated, of which 126 were male and 158 were female. We aimed at including at least 45 Muslim respondents in our sample. Of the respondents, 46 (16%) indicated they were Muslim. Furthermore, 120 (42%) indicated they were non-religious, 51 (18%) indicated they were Protestant, 28 (10%) Catholic, 14 (5%) spiritual, 3 (1%) Buddhist, 3 (1%) Jewish, and 19 (7%) respondents indicated they had an 'other' (non- specified) religious background. Compared to the religious composition of Dutch society, only the Catholics were clearly under-represented in our sample (27% of the Dutch population is Catholic, Statistics Netherlands, 2009b). All respondents were at least 17 years old. Most respondents (52%) were between 20 and 40 years of age. The majority

of the respondents (80%) had finished or was taking part in a bachelor's or master's program, compared to 30% of the total Dutch population (Statistics Netherlands, 2011), which implies a substantial over-representation of highly educated individuals in our sample.

Respondents were asked to participate in a study conducted by the University of Groningen about their opinion of contemporary Dutch society by filling in a questionnaire. Digital and paper versions of the questionnaire were made. A link to the digital version was put on religious and social network forums and circulated via e-mail in the networks of the researchers using the snow ball method, taking into account that the respondents were different from the ones included in previous studies (Chapter 3 and Chapter 4). The paper version was distributed among students of a university of applied sciences in the Amsterdam region (Almere), and on the streets in the city of Utrecht, both in the central part of the Netherlands. In doing so, we aimed at including respondents from different religious and demographical backgrounds in our sample.

Measures

Two versions of the questionnaire were made, one for the respondents that were recruited at the university of applied sciences (the student version) and one for the other respondents (the general version). Only the first question, concerning the non-condemning intentions towards either a Muslim or a non-outgroup member, differed between these two versions. The non-condemning intentions were measured with the use of two scenarios. In the first scenario, respondents in the student version were told to imagine they made a joke during a recess at school which was appreciated by most of their fellow-students, except for one. This student approaches the respondent after the recess to say that he did not like the joke. In the general version, 'school' was replaced with 'work',' fellow-students' with 'colleagues' and 'student' with 'colleague'. The second scenario was the same in both versions of the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to imagine they were at a friend's party. During a discussion one of the attendees expresses a viewpoint the respondent completely disagrees with. In the non-outgroup condition, nothing was said about the background of the other person in the two scenarios (respectively the student/colleague or party attendee), while in the outgroup condition this person was said to be a Muslim. After each scenario, respondents were given four possible reactions, which differed in the degree to which they reflect a non-condemning intention. For each reaction, respondents had to indicate how likely it would be that they would react in this way on a scale from 1 (completely unlikely) to 5 (very likely). Two reactions of each scenario were formulated negatively, in the sense that a low score indicated a strongly non-condemning intention. We refer to the Appendix for details of the two scenarios and reactions.

Second, respondents were shown other scenarios, and were asked questions about their stance towards a culturally and religiously diverse Dutch society. These scenarios and questions are irrelevant for the aim of this study and will therefore not be discussed further.

Third, respondents were asked to rank each of the 16 virtues found to be relevant to contemporary Dutch society (Chapter 2). They had to divide the 16 virtues into sets of four, with the first group indicating which virtues they pursued most to the last group indicating which virtues they pursued least in their daily life. By forcing the respondents to choose among the virtues, we aimed to reduce possible effects of social desirability.

Furthermore, in order to assess respondents' agreement with the ten different virtue interpretations (see Table 2), we asked respondents to rate their agreement with various virtue interpretations on a scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). For each interpretation, we selected examples that were mentioned in the qualitative study (Chapter 3), yielding the following numbers of examples for each virtue: For *respect*, we used two examples of *unconditional respect*, and for *status* and *achieved respect* we used one example each. For *openness,* two examples of *being open to others* and two examples of *being open about oneself* were used. For *love*, two examples of *compassion and attention to closely related others*, one example of *compassion and attention to all others*, and one example of *seeing the good side of others* were used. For *trust*, we used one example of *interpersonal trust* and one example of *trust as an optimistic attitude to life*. An example of an interpretation of *unconditional respect* as part of *respect* is: "Respect means perspective taking and trying to understand the other", and an example of an interpretation of *compassion and attention to closely related others* as part of *love* is "love means being there for others in one's social environment, such as partners, relatives and friends". In the remainder of this chapter, the agreement with the various virtue interpretations will be referred to as virtue interpretations.

We first showed respondents the scenarios and then asked them about their pursuit of the virtues and virtue interpretations, in order to ensure that their reactions to the scenarios were not affected by thinking about the virtues.

Finally, biographical questions on gender, age, level of education, and religious background were asked.

Analyses part 1

Virtue interpretations among Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch. For the virtue interpretations that included more than one example to measure respondents' interpretation, we computed an agreement score for each respondent as the mean of the item scores on the examples referring to the specific virtue inter-

pretation. These scores were then analyzed as if measured on an interval scale.

All analyses were performed with SPSS (IBM SPSS Statistics version 20, 2011), unless indicated differently. In order to test for each virtue whether some virtue interpretations received higher agreements than others, and whether this would differ between Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch, we conducted a Repeated Measures MANOVA per virtue. In each Repeated Measures MANOVA, we took the various virtue interpretations as the dependent variables and group membership as the independent variable.

To explore which of the virtue interpretations shows the largest difference between Muslims and non-Muslims, we performed a discriminant analysis with the ten main virtue interpretations as predictors of group membership.

Analyses part 2

The pursuit of the 16 virtues among non-Muslim Dutch. To examine the degree to which the non-Muslim respondents pursued the 16 virtues, we assigned rank scores for each respondent to each of the 16 virtues. Virtues placed in the first group (ranked as pursued most) received a score of 4, virtues put in the second group (ranked as pursued secondly) a score of 3, and so on. These rank scores were analyzed as if measured on an interval scale.

Analysis of the psychometric properties of the scenarios that measured non-condemning intentions. Because we formulated the eight reactions to the two scenarios in such a way that they reflect various degrees of non-condemning intentions, we expected the eight reactions to form a single scale. Moreover, to warrant a comparison of the scale scores across the two conditions, the items should have no differential item functioning across conditions, i.e., they should reflect the degree of non-condemning intentions in the same way. To examine whether the eight reactions form a single scale and to assess a possible differential item functioning across conditions, we conducted a Mokken scale analysis (MSA) (Mokken, 1971; Sijtsma & Molenaar, 2002). We chose the nonparametric item response model MSA, because this is based on less restrictive assumptions than parametric alternatives, like the factor model, and is less sensitive to small sample sizes. We considered the monotone homogeneity model (MHM), which implies whether individuals' sum scores of the items provide the ordering of the individuals on the latent trait. This model is based on the following three assumptions: 1. Unidimensionality: all scale items measure the same latent variable; 2. Local independence: respondents' scores on one item of the scale are not influenced by scores on the other items of the scale; and 3. Monotonicity: a higher attribute level of the latent variable corresponds to a higher expected item score.

The MSA was performed using the Mokken scale analysis program for polyto-

mous items (Molenaar & Sijtsma, 2000). For each item, the item scalability coefficient H_i indicates whether the item belongs to this scale ($H_i > 0$), and if so, it indicates the item's discriminative power across individuals, where values should exceed 0.30 for the item to have sufficient strength (Mokken, 1971). H indicates the strength of a scale and is based on the H_i values of the scale items, where $0.30 \leq H < .40$ indicates a weak scale, $0.40 \leq H \leq 0.50$ indicates a moderate scale, and $H > 0.50$ indicates a strong scale. To assess possible differential item functioning across conditions, the ordering of the response categories of the eight items is compared across conditions. A different ordering suggests different item functioning, which suggests that the scale could not be used to compare the two conditions.

Analyses of the relations between the pursuit of virtues, virtue interpretations and non-condemning intentions. To explore possible differences between the two conditions regarding respondents' scores on the pursuit of the virtues, the virtue interpretations, and the non-condemning intentions, we conducted three MANOVA's. In these MANOVA's, we included as the dependent variables the pursuits of the four virtues, the ten virtue interpretations, and the non-condemning intentions (i.e., the MANOVA boiled down to an ANOVA), respectively, and group membership (condition) as the independent variable. With respect to the pursuits of the virtues and the virtue interpretations, we did not expect structural differences between the two conditions, because the respondents were randomly assigned. Furthermore, we did not expect the scenarios to influence the pursuits of the virtues and the virtue interpretations reported. In case of significant differences, follow-up ANOVA's were conducted to examine for which virtues and/or virtue interpretations differences were found between the two conditions; we corrected for multiple hypothesis testing using Holm-Bonferroni (Holm, 1979), with the overall alpha set at .05.

To test our hypotheses concerning the relations between the pursuit of the four virtues, virtue interpretations, and the non-condemning intentions, we first computed the pairwise correlations between the scores on the pursuit of the four virtues and non-condemning intentions, and on the ten virtue interpretations and non-condemning intentions per condition. Afterwards, we conducted a regression analysis for each virtue separately. The pursuit of the virtue, its interpretations, and the interaction between these two were entered as predictors into the regression model. In addition, we tested whether there was a main effect of condition (dummy coded with the non-outgroup condition being the reference group) and interaction effects of the pursuit of the virtue, its interpretations and condition. Because no effect was expected, the latter interaction effects were only preserved in the regression model when significant; we corrected for multiple hypothesis testing using Holm-Bonferroni (Holm, 1979), with the overall alpha set at .05. Because the

predictors in the regression model may be correlated, the unique contribution of each of the predictors to the explained variance in non-condemning intentions in the specific regression model (sr^2) is reported.

Results

Part 1

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the 284 respondents that participated in part 1 of this study. As Table 1 shows, the Muslim respondents appeared to be younger and had a somewhat lower level of education than the non-Muslim respondents.

In Table 2, the mean agreement scores of the respondents on the main interpretations of *respect, openness, love,* and *trust* are shown.

Table 1. *Demographic characteristics of the respondents participating in part 1 (n = 284)*

	Total	**Muslims**	**Non-Muslims**
Total respondents (*n*)	284	46	238
Gender (percentage)			
males	44%	41%	45%
females	56%	59%	55%
Age (percentage)			
19 years old and younger	6%	9%	6%
20-30 years old	30%	63%	23%
31-40 years old	22%	26%	21%
41-50 years old	13%	2%	15%
51-60 years old	19%		23%
61-70 years old	9%		10%
71 years old and older	1%		2%
Level of education (percentage)			
Lower vocational education	2%		2%
Second vocational education	13%	23%	11%
Higher general secondary education	1%	2%	1%
Pre-university education	1%	2%	1%
Bachelor	46%	41%	47%
Master	33%	20%	35%
Missing	4%	12%	3%

Table 2. *Mean agreement scores on each type of virtue interpretation (range 1-5) for the Muslim and non-Muslim respondents*

		Respect					
		Unconditional respect		***Achieved respect***		***Status respect***	
	n	M (*SD*)	95% CI	M (*SD*)	95% CI	M (*SD*)	95% CI
Muslims	**46**	**4.22 (.77)**	**3.99-4.45**	**3.26 (1.16)**	**2.92-3.61**	**3.30 (1.17)**	**2.96-3.65**
Non-Muslims	**238**	**4.05 (.87)**	**3.94-4.16**	**3.06 (1.24)**	**2.90-3.22**	**2.78 (1.31)**	**2.61-2.95**
Catholics	28	4.29 (.67)	4.02-4.55	3.14 (1.15)	2.70-3.59	2.79 (1.07)	2.37-3.20
Protestants	51	4.14 (.79)	3.92-4.36	3.06 (1.22)	2.71-3.40	2.88 (1.34)	2.51-.3.26
Secularists	120	4.00 (.94)	3.83-4.17	3.05 (1.26)	2.82-3.28	2.87 (1.35)	2.62-3.11
Other	39	3.91 (.83)	3.64-4.18	3.03 (1.33)	2.60-3.46	2.38 (1.25)	1.98-2.79
Total	**284**	**4.08 (.85)**	**3.98-4.18**	**3.09 (1.23)**	**2.95-3.24**	**2.87 (1.30)**	**2.71-3.02**

		Openness			
		Being open to others		***Being open about oneself***	
	n	M (*SD*)	95% CI	M (*SD*)	95% CI
Muslims	**46**	**3.78 (.85)**	**3.53-4.04**	**4.02 (.87)**	**3.76-4.28**
Non-Muslims	**238**	**3.87 (.92)**	**3.76-3.99**	**3.96 (.79)**	**3.86-4.06**
Catholics	28	4.05 (.87)	3.71-4.39	3.88 (.81)	3.56-4.19
Protestants	51	3.83 (.90)	3.58-4.09	3.78 (.83)	3.55-4.02
Secularists	120	3.92 (.91)	3.76-4.09	3.99 (.81)	3.84-4.13
Other	39	3.65 (1.01)	3.33-3.98	4.17 (.60)	3.97-4.36
Total	**284**	**3.86 (.91)**	**3.75-3.97**	**3.97 (.80)**	**3.88-4.06**

		Love					
		Compassion and attention to closely related others		***Compassion and attention to all others***		***Seeing the good side of others***	
	n	M (*SD*)	95% CI	M (*SD*)	95% CI	M (*SD*)	95% CI
Muslims	**46**	**4.30 (.69)**	**4.10-4.51**	**3.09 (1.33)**	**2.69-3.48**	**3.39 (1.06)**	**3.08-3.71**
Non-Muslims	**238**	**4.07 (.79)**	**3.97-4.17**	**3.26 (1.16)**	**3.12-3.41**	**3.53 (1.13)**	**3.39-3.67**
Catholics	28	4.14 (.69)	3.87-4.41	3.32 (1.28)	2.83-3.82	3.71 (1.08)	3.29-4.13
Protestants	51	4.22 (.69)	4.02-4.50	3.84 (.99)	3.57-4.12	3.84 (.90)	3.59-4.10
Secularists	120	4.07 (.77)	3.93-4.21	3.09 (1.10)	2.89-3.29	3.28 (1.20)	3.07-3.50
Other	39	3.82 (.99)	3.50-4.14	3.00 (1.26)	2.59-3.41	3.74 (1.09)	3.39-4.10
Total	**284**	**4.11 (.78)**	**4.02-4.20**	**3.24 (1.19)**	**3.10-3.38**	**3.51 (1.12)**	**3.38-3.64**

		Trust			
		An optimistic attitude to life		***Interpersonal trust***	
	n	M (*SD*)	95% CI	M (*SD*)	95% CI
Muslims	**46**	**3.93 (.85)**	**3.68-4.19**	**3.76 (.99)**	**3.47-4.06**
Non-Muslims	**238**	**4.05 (.99)**	**3.92-4.17**	**3.88 (1.05)**	**3.75-4.02**
Catholics	28	4.18 (.94)	3.81-4.55	3.96 (.96)	3.59-4.34
Protestants	51	4.37 (.75)	4.16-4.58	3.92 (.98)	3.65-4.20
Secularists	120	3.92 (1.04)	3.73-4.11	3.92 (1.02)	3.73-4.10
Other	39	3.92 (1.09)	3.57-4.27	3.67 (1.30)	3.24-4.09
Total	**284**	**4.02 (.97)**	**3.91-4.14**	**3.86 (1.04)**	**3.74-3.98**

Note. Mean agreement scores of the group of Muslims, non-Muslims and of the total are marked in boldface, because these scores are of our main interest. The Other group consists of Spiritual (n = 15), Buddhist (n = 3), Jewish (n = 2), and respondents with a not further specified religious background (n = 19)

Results of the Repeated Measures MANOVA. For *respect*, no significant interaction between virtue interpretations and group membership (Muslims versus non-Muslim) was found (Wilks' Lambda = .99, F (2,281) = 1.13, p =.325, partial η^2 = .01), suggesting that the pattern of the agreement scores on the three interpretations of *respect* does not differ between Muslims and non-Muslims. We did find differences between the three interpretations across both groups (Wilks' Lambda = .74, F (2,281) = 48.74, p <.001, partial η^2 = .26). As Table 2 shows, respondents most agreed with the interpretation of *respect* as *unconditional respect* (95% CI: 3.98-4.18), followed by its interpretations as *achieved respect* (95% CI: 2.95-3.24) and *status respect* (95% CI: 2.71-3.02). The mean agreement scores on *unconditional respect* are significantly higher than those on *achieved* and *status respect* (p <.001 for both comparisons).

For *openness*, neither a significant interaction between the virtue interpretations and group membership (Wilks' Lambda = 1.00, F (1,282) = .63, p = .427, partial η^2 = .00) nor a significant difference between the two interpretations (Wilks' Lambda = .99, F (1,282) = 2.86, p = .092, partial η^2 = .01) was found. This suggests that the two interpretations have the same level of agreement, and that this holds for both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Regarding *love*, we found a significant interaction between virtue interpretations and group membership (Wilks' Lambda = .98, F (2,282) = 3.52, p = .031, partial η^2 = .02), indicating that the pattern of the agreement scores on the three interpretations differs for Muslims and non-Muslims. We also found differences between the three interpretations across both groups (Wilks' Lambda = .65, F (2,281) = 76.63, p <.001, partial η^2 = .35). As Table 2 shows, both Muslims and non-Muslims agreed more strongly with the interpretation of *love* as *compassion and attention to closely related others*, (95% CI: 4.02-4.20) compared to *seeing the good side of others* (95%CI: 3.38-3.64) and *compassion and attention to all others* (95% CI: 3.10-3.38), but, compared to non-Muslims, Muslims scored higher on the first interpretation and lower on the other two interpretations.

With regard to *trust*, neither a significant interaction between virtue interpretations and group membership was found (Wilks' Lambda = 1.00, F (1,282) = <.01, p = .957, partial η^2 = .00), nor a significant difference between the two interpretations across both groups (Wilks' Lambda = .99, F (1,282) = 3.24, p =.073, partial η^2 = .01). This indicates that the two interpretations have the same level of agreement, and that this holds for both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Results of the discriminant analysis. Since only two groups were involved, the discriminant analysis yielded one discriminant function. This function had an eigenvalue of .07, which was almost significant (Wilks' Lambda = .94, $\chi^2(10)$ = 18.26, p =.051). In Table 3, the correlations between the interpretations of the four virtues and this function are shown. Following Tabachnick and Fidell

(2007), we used a correlation of .33 in absolute value as the threshold for contributing substantially to the function. Muslims scored higher on the function (M = .59, *SD* = 1.04, 95% CI: .28-.90) compared to non-Muslims (M = -.11, *SD* = .99, 95% CI: -.24-.01). This indicates that in our sample, Muslims agreed more strongly with the interpretations of *respect* as *unconditional respect* and *status respect*, and the interpretation of *love* as *compassion and attention to closely related others*, and less strongly with the interpretation of *love* as *compassion and attention to all others*, and the interpretation of *trust* as *interpersonal trust*, compared to non-Muslims (see Table 2).

Table 3. *Correlations between virtue interpretations and the function found in the discriminant analysis (n = 284)*

	Function
Respect	
Unconditional respect	**.45**
Achieved respect	.18
Status respect	**.51**
Openness	
Being open towards others	-.29
Being open about oneself	.02
Love	
Compassion and attention to all others	**-.57**
Compassion and attention to closely related others	**.65**
Seeing the good side of others	.02
Trust	
Optimistic attitude to life	-.29
Interpersonal trust	**-.33**

Note. Correlations >.33 are marked boldface

Part 2

Of the 238 non-Muslims participating in this study, 213 filled in the questions regarding the non-condemning intentions towards either an outgroup member (Muslim) or a non-outgroup member completely. Of these 213 respondents, 104 participated in the outgroup condition and 109 in the non-outgroup condition. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are shown in Table 4 for each condition and across conditions.

Table 4. *Demographic characteristics of the respondents participating in part 2 (n = 213)*

	Total	**Outgroup condition**	**Non-outgroup condition**
Total respondents (*n*)	213	104	109
Gender (percentage)			
males	43%	39%	47%
females	57%	61%	53%
Age (percentage)			
19 years old and younger	1%		3%
20-30 years old	22%	20%	23%
31-40 years old	23%	25%	20%
41-50 years old	16%	18%	14%
51-60 years old	25%	23%	28%
61-70 years old	11%	10%	12%
71 years old and older	2%	3%	1%
Level of education (percentage)			
Lower vocational education	2%	3%	1%
Secondary vocational education	12%	14%	10%
Higher general secondary education	1%	1%	1%
Pre-university education	1%	1%	1%
Bachelor	43%	38%	49%
Master	38%	40%	36%
Missing	3%	3%	2%

Psychometric properties of the scenarios. With regard to the quality of the eight items measuring non-condemning intentions, the MSA revealed that two of the eight items were non-scalable (i.e., H_i values ≤ 0). The H_i values of the remaining items varied between .14 and .32. Both non-scalable items belonged to the scenario concerning the joke at school or work. Since the other two items belonging to this scenario had H_i values below .30 (.14 and .25, respectively), we excluded this scenario from the analysis. The MSA of the remaining four items that belong to the scenario concerning the discussion at a friend's party revealed a scale with a range from $.27 \leq H_i \leq .38$, with H equal to .32. Removal of the item with the H_i value < 0.30 yielded a scale with values of H_i ranging from .35 to .38, and H equal to .36. This implies that the three items form a weak Mokken scale. A comparison of the ordering of the response categories for the three items across the conditions showed no indication for different item functioning, suggesting that the scale scores can be sensibly used to compare the two conditions.

An MSA of the four items that belong to the scenario concerning the joke at school or work indicated that these four items form a Mokken scale, with H_i ranging

from .20 to .26. However, the scale is too weak to distinguish sensibly between participants, with *H* equal to .23. Therefore, we only considered the scale based on the three items that belong to the scenario of the discussion at a friend's party as an acceptable indication of non-condemning intentions.

Summary statistics. Table 5 shows summary statistics of the pursuit of *respect, openness, love* and *trust,* the ten virtue interpretations, and the non-condemning intentions among the non-Muslims per condition. Regarding the pursuit of the four virtues, the MANOVA revealed no significant differences between the two conditions (F (4, 166) = 1.40, p =.24, η = .03). For the virtue interpretations, the MANOVA showed a significant difference between the conditions (F (10,202) = 2.42, p = .010, η = .11). Post hoc ANOVA's, correcting for multiple hypothesis testing using Bonferroni's Holm (Holm, 1979), revealed a significant difference regarding *achieved respect* (F (1,211) = 8.33, p = .004, η = .04). That is, respondents in the non-outgroup condition agreed more strongly with the interpretation of *respect* as *achieved respect* than respondents in the outgroup condition. For the non-condemning intentions, respondents in the outgroup condition scored significantly higher compared to respondents in the non-outgroup condition, (F (1,211) = 10.52, p = .001, η = .05).

Table 6 shows the correlations between the pursuit of the four virtues, the virtue interpretations and the non-condemning intentions for each condition. With regard to the pursuit of virtues, there only appeared to be a significant positive relation between pursuing *love* and the non-condemning intentions in the outgroup condition. With regard to the virtue interpretations, there appeared to be a significant positive relation between the agreement with the interpretation of *respect* as *unconditional respect*, the interpretation of *openness* as *being open to others*, the interpretation of *love* as *seeing the good side of others*, and the interpretation of *trust* as *an optimistic attitude to life*, and the non-condemning intentions in the outgroup condition.

Table 5. *Summary statistics of the pursuit of virtues, virtue interpretations and non-condemning intentions among non-Muslims in the outgroup and the non-outgroup condition*

	Outgroup condition		**Non-outgroup condition**		**Difference Mean between conditions**
	n	**M (*SD*)**	***n***	**M (*SD*)**	**95% CI**
The pursuit of virtues (range 1-4): *Respect*	102	3.59 (.71)	105	3.60 (.72)	-.18 –.21
Openness	95	2.58 (1.01)	105	2.72 (1.03)	-.14 –.49
Love	100	3.16 (1.05)	106	3.39 (.87)	-.04 –.49
Trust	93	3.25 (.78)	95	3.44 (.71)	-.02 –.41
Virtue interpretations (range 1-5): *Respect*					
Unconditional respect	104	4.01 (.88)	109	4.17 (.82)	-.07 –.39
Achieved respect	104	2.81 (1.27)	109	3.28 (1.14)	.15 –.80
Status respect	104	2.76 (1.26)	109	2.75 (1.30)	-.35 –.34
Openness					
Being open to others	104	3.93 (.91)	109	3.87 (.96)	-.31 –.19
Being open about oneself	104	3.91 (.81)	109	4.00 (.76)	-.12 –.30
Love					
Compassion and attention to closely related others	104	4.00 (.90)	109	4.20 (.62)	.00 –.41
Compassion and attention for all others	104	3.37 (1.10)	109	3.72 (1.13)	.07 –.69
Seeing the good side of others	104	3.11 (1.19)	109	3.49 (1.11)	.05 –.65
Trust					
An optimistic attitude to life	104	4.10 (1.01)	109	4.17 (.89)	-.19 –.33
Interpersonal trust	104	3.72 (1.19)	109	4.06 (.90)	.06 –.63
Non-condemning intentions (1-5) *Non-condemning intentions*	104	4.02 (.85)	109	3.64 (.82)	-.60 – -.14

Table 6. *Correlations between the pursuit of virtues, virtue interpretations and non-condemning intentions among non-Muslims in the outgroup and the non-outgroup condition*

	Non-condemning intentions outgroup		**Non-condemning intentions non-outgroup**	
	n	***r***	***n***	***r***
Pursuing the virtues (range 1-4)				
Respect	102	-.07	105	.04
Openness	95	.11	105	.04
Love	100	.21*	106	.15
Trust	93	-.03	95	.08
Virtue interpretations (range 1-4)				
Respect				
Unconditional respect	104	.30**	109	.16
Achieved respect	104	.12	109	.06
Status respect	104	-.05	109	-.07
Openness				
Being open to others	104	.38***	109	.15
Being open about oneself	104	.01	109	.05
Love				
Compassion and attention to closely related others	104	.14	109	.08
Compassion and attention to all others	104	.13	109	-.03
Seeing the good side of others	104	.20*	109	.17
Trust				
An optimistic attitude to life	104	.22*	109	.05
Interpersonal trust	104	.12	109	.09

*Note. *** p ≤.001, ** p ≤.01, *p ≤..05. Missing values are due to respondents that did not score the importance attached to expressing the virtue in daily life*

Results regression analyses. There were some observed differences in the strength of the correlations between the pursuit of virtues and the non-condemning intentions, and virtue interpretations and the non-condemning intentions between the two conditions. However, in all tested regression models, the interaction effects of the pursuit of virtues, virtue interpretations and condition on the non-condemning intentions appeared non-significant. Therefore, these effects were not retained in the regression models explained below.

Respect. Table 7a shows the regression model with as the dependent variable the non-condemning intentions and as predictors the pursuit of *respect*, its three interpretations, and condition. These predictors explained significant vari-

ation in intentions (F (8, 198) = 2.86, p = .005). We found a significant positive main effect of condition ($beta_c$ = .28, t = 3.93, p <.001, where beta indicates an estimated standardized regression coefficient), which indicates that respondents in the outgroup condition showed stronger non-condemning intentions compared to respondents in the non-outgroup condition. Additionally, a significant positive main effect of the interpretation of *respect* as *unconditional respect* was found ($beta_{ur}$ = .19, t = 2.65, p =.009), which means that the more respondents agree with this interpretation, the stronger their non-condemning intentions are for both the outgroup and the non-outgroup condition. In contrast to our hypothesis, no significant interaction effect between the pursuit of *respect* and its interpretation as *unconditional respect* was found.

Openness. The regression model with the pursuit of *openness*, its two interpretations, and condition predicting the non-condemning intentions explained significant variance (F (6, 193) = 4.58, p < .001) (see Table 7b). We found significant positive main effects of condition ($beta_c$ = .21, t = 3.09, p =.002) and of the interpretation of *openness* as *being open towards others* ($beta_{oto}$ = .24, t = 3.47, p =.001). The latter indicates that the more respondents agree with this interpretation, the stronger their non-condemning intentions are for both conditions. In contrast to our hypothesis, no interaction effect between the pursuit of *openness* and its interpretation as *being open to others* was found.

Love. As Table 7c shows, the pursuit of *love*, its three interpretations, and condition explained significant variance in the non-condemning intentions (F (8, 197) = 4.17, p < .001). Besides a significant positive main effect of condition ($beta_c$ = .29, t = 4.24, p <.001), we found a significant positive main effect of the interpretation of *love* as *seeing the good side of others* ($beta_{lgo}$ = .20, t = 2.83, p = .005). This means that the more respondents agree with this interpretation, the stronger their non-condemning intentions are for both conditions. No evidence for the hypothesized interaction effect between the pursuit of *love* and agreement scores with its interpretation as *seeing the good side of others* was found.

Trust. The pursuit of *trust*, its two interpretations, and condition did explain significant variation in the non-condemning intentions (F (6, 187) = 2.20, p = .045, see Table 7d). Only condition appeared to have a significant positive main effect ($beta_c$ = .25, t = 3.37, p =.001). In contrast to our hypothesis, no significant interaction effect between the pursuit of *trust* and agreement scores with its interpretation as *interpersonal trust* was found.

Table 7a. *Results of the regression analysis with the pursuit of respect, its interpretations, and condition as predictors of non-condemning intentions (n = 207)*

	Intention		
Respect	**beta**	***p***	***sr²***
Effects of pursuing and interpretation:			
Pursuing	-.04	.655	<.01
Interpretation as unconditional	.19**	.009	.03
Interpretation as achieved	.08	.258	<.01
Interpretation as status	-.03	.651	<.01
Pursuing * interpretation as unconditional	.02	.866	<.01
Pursuing * interpretation as achieved	.02	.706	<.01
Pursuing * interpretation as status	-.07	.352	<.01
Effect of condition			
Condition	.28***	<.001	.07
R (R^2)	.32 (.10)		
Df	8,198		
F	2.86**		

*Note. Beta indicates an estimated standardized regression coefficient where *** means p ≤.001, ** means p ≤.01, * means p ≤.05. Missing values are due to respondents that did not score the importance attached to expressing the virtue in daily life*

Table 7b. *Results of the regression analysis with the pursuit of openness, its interpretations, and condition as predictors of non-condemning intentions (n = 200)*

	Intention		
Openness	**beta**	***p***	***sr²***
Effects of pursuing and interpretation:			
Pursuing	.01	.889	<.01
Interpretation as being open to others	.24***	.001	.05
Interpretation as being open about oneself	.03	.676	<.01
Pursuing * interpretation as being open to others	.04	.527	<.01
Pursuing * interpretation as being open about oneself	.08	.276	<.01
Effect of condition			
Condition	.21**	.002	.04
R (R^2)	.35 (.13)		
Df	6,193		
F	4.58***		

*Note. Beta indicates an estimated standardized regression coefficient where ***means p ≤.001, ** means p ≤.01, * means p ≤.05. Missing values are due to respondents that did not score the importance attached to expressing the virtue in daily life*

Table 7c. *Results of the regression analysis with the pursuit of love, its interpretations, and condition as predictors of non-condemning intentions (n = 206)*

	Intention		
Love	**beta**	***p***	***sr²***
Effects of pursuing and interpretation:			
Pursuing	.11	.114	.01
Interpretation as compassion and attention to closely related others	.11	.154	<.01
Interpretation as compassion and attention to all others	-.09	.257	<.01
Interpretation as seeing the good side of others	.20**	.005	.03
Pursuing * interpretation as compassion and attention to closely related others	-.01	.866	<.01
Pursuing * interpretation as compassion and attention to all others	-.09	.280	<.01
Pursuing * interpretation as seeing the good side of others	-.06	.429	<.01
Effect of condition			
Condition	.29***	<.001	.08
R (R^2)	.38 (.15)		
Df	8,197		
F	4.17***		

*Note. Beta indicates an estimated standardized regression coefficient where ***means p ≤.001, ** means p ≤.01, * means p ≤.05. Missing values are due to respondents that did not score the importance attached to expressing the virtue in daily life*

Table 7d. *Results of the regression analysis with the pursuit of trust, its interpretations, and condition as predictors of non-condemning intentions (n = 188)*

	Intention		
Trust	**beta**	***p***	***sr²***
Effects of pursuing and interpretation:			
Pursuing	.01	.921	<.01
Interpretation as an optimistic attitude to life	.03	.682	<.01
Interpretation as interpersonal trust	.10	.186	.01
Pursuing* interpretation as an optimistic attitude to life	-.01	.923	<.01
Pursuing * interpretation as interpersonal trust	.03	.692	<.01
Effect of condition			
Condition	.25**	.001	.06
R (R^2)	.26 (.07)		
Df	6,181		
F	2.20*		

*Note. Beta indicates an estimated standardized regression coefficient where ***means p ≤.001, ** means p ≤.01, * means p ≤.05. Missing values are due to respondents that did not score the importance attached to expressing the virtue in daily life*

Discussion

The first aim of the present study was to examine the way Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch interpret *respect, openness, love* and *trust*. Results show that some virtue interpretations receive a larger degree of agreement than others. Of the three main interpretations of *respect*, its interpretation as *unconditional respect* was regarded as the most characteristic by both Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch. For *openness*, both interpretations as *being open to others* and *being open about oneself* were regarded as highly appropriate. According to both groups, the interpretation of *love* as *compassion and attention to closely related others* is more characteristic to *love* than *seeing the good side of others* and *compassion and attention to all others*. Regarding *trust*, its interpretations as *an optimistic attitude to life* and *interpersonal trust* were regarded equally characteristic.

Muslims scored higher on the interpretation of *respect* as *unconditional respect* and *status respect* than non-Muslims. Muslims scored also higher on the interpretation of *love* as *compassion and attention to closely related others*, and lower on the interpretation of *love* as *compassion and attention to all others*, than non-Muslims do. Muslims scored slightly lower on the interpretation of *trust* as *interpersonal trust* than non-Muslims. The finding that Muslims agree stronger with the interpretation of *respect* as *status respect* may be an expression of respect for elderly people (a form of *status respect*) being more relevant to Muslims than to non-Muslims (Chapter 3). Despite these differences, we found for all four virtues a remarkable agreement with respect to which interpretations were seen as most characteristic among Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch.

The second aim of this study was to investigate the relations between non-Muslims' pursuit of *respect, openness, love* and *trust*, their degree of agreement with the interpretations of these virtues that refer to being non-condemning and understanding towards others, and their actual intention to act in a non-condemning and understanding way towards another person with a different viewpoint who was either a Muslim (outgroup member) or a person whose religious background was not specified (non-outgroup member). As expected, we found that when a person expresses a different viewpoint, non-condemning intentions are stronger when this person concerns an outgroup member compared to a non-outgroup member. We found small differences between the conditions regarding agreement with the different virtue interpretations. The agreement with the interpretation of *respect* as *achieved respect* appeared to be larger in the non-outgroup condition. We have no convincing theoretical explanation for this difference between the two conditions.

For each of the four virtues *respect, openness, love,* and *trust*, we predicted an interaction effect between the pursuit of the virtue and the agreement with its interpretation referring to being non-condemning and understanding towards others, including unfamiliar others, on non-condemning intentions. For none of the

four virtues evidence for such an interaction effect was found. We did find main effects of the degree of agreement with the interpretations of *respect* as *unconditional respect*, of *openness* as *being open to others*, and of *love* as *seeing the good side of others* on non-condemning intentions. In hindsight, the way we measured the pursuit of virtues in the present study may be a reason for not finding any effect on non-condemning intentions. We forced people to choose among the 16 virtues and, doing so, we measured the pursuit of the virtues in a relative rather than absolute sense. However, the degree to which people pursue the virtues in absolute sense may predict their non-condemning intentions, and this relation may be strengthened by the way they interpret the virtues. The found main effects of degree of agreement with the specific interpretations of *respect, openness* and *love* can be explained by the tendency of Dutch citizens to generally regard these three virtues as worth pursuing (Chapter 4). As a consequence, they will be motivated to express these virtues in behavior. How they express these virtues will be determined by the way they interpret them. Therefore, the extent to which they agree with the interpretations that refer to being non-condemning and understanding towards others may be related to the degree to which they display non-condemning intentions towards others.

Unexpectedly, the agreement with the interpretation of *trust* as *interpersonal trust* appeared not to be related to non-condemning intentions as measured in the present study. *Interpersonal trust* is possibly related less to being non-condemning and understanding towards others than *unconditional respect*, *openness to others*, and *love* interpreted as *trying to see the good side of others*, because it has more to do with positive expectations of the intentions of others (e.g., Evans & Krueger, 2009; Rotter, 1967; Yamagishi, Kanazawa, Mashima & Terai, 2005). *Interpersonal trust* may positively contribute to bridging social capital rather by reducing feelings of intergroup threat than by promoting non-condemning and understanding behavior towards outgroup members.

Limitations and directions for future research

The present study has some limitations. First, there are limitations with regard to our sample. Since respondents participated voluntarily in this study, a selection bias is likely. Most clearly, our sample mainly consists of highly educated respondents. As a consequence, our results cannot be generalized to the level of society. Among groups with a lower level of education, more differences in virtue interpretations across Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch may be found. Moreover, since highly educated people tend to show more acceptance of other group identities and cultures (e.g., Chapter 4; Breugelmans & Van de Vijver, 2004; Verkuyten, 2009), less non-condemning intentions towards Muslims may be found within a more representative non-Muslim sample.

Second, there are some limitations concerning the measures used in the second part of this study. Regarding the pursuit of virtues, we only measured the relative pursuit and did not investigate the degree to which respondents pursue the virtues in absolute sense. Moreover, the scale we used to measure non-condemning intentions towards others appeared to be weak. Future research should use an instrument to examine the absolute pursuit of virtues and a more reliable measure of non-condemning intentions in order to further explore the possible relations between the pursuit of virtues, agreement with various virtue interpretations, and non-condemning and understanding intentions towards outgroup members. Another important limitation is that we focused on intentions and not on actual behavior towards others. Although intentions are considered to predict future behavior (Azjen, 1991), and a positive correlation between intentions and behavior has been established (e.g., Fishbein et al., 2001), further research needs to focus on actual accepting behavior towards outgroup members. In addition, it would be worthwhile to investigate the relation between the pursuit of virtues, agreement with the different virtue interpretations, and measures to indicate the willingness to actually interact or cooperate with outgroup members, in order to examine the usefulness of virtues as a concept to strengthen bridging social capital and the possible role of virtue interpretations.

Conclusions

Respect, *love*, *trust* and openness are highly valued virtues across Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch (Chapter 1 and Chapter 4). This study indicates that these groups largely agree on their interpretations of these virtues. Regarding the potential of these virtues to improve intergroup relations, this study showed that among non-Muslim Dutch the agreement with the interpretation of *respect* as *unconditional respect*, the interpretation of *love* as *seeing the good side of others*, and the interpretation of *openness* as *being open to others* seem to be positively related to non-condemning intentions towards others, including Muslims. *Unconditional respect* is regarded as the most characteristic interpretation of *respect* across both Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch, making *respect*, in particular, an applicable virtue in improving the relations between these groups in contemporary Dutch society.

Appendix

Scenario 1

You made a joke during a recess at school (work) which is appreciated by most of your fellow students (colleagues). One (Islamic) fellow student (colleague) did not like the joke. After the recess he approaches you to discuss this. What chance is there that:

	Completely unlikely				*Very likely*
Your relationship with him is damaged after this incident.*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
You try to convince him that he should be able to handle these types of jokes.*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
You think his reaction is a bit exaggerated, but that does not make him seem less friendly.	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
You try to understand why he does not like the joke so you can take his beliefs into account in the future.	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*

Scenario 2

You are at a friend's party. During a discussion, a (n Islamic) friend of your friend expresses a viewpoint you absolutely do not agree with. When he is talking, what chance is there that you:

	Completely unlikely				*Very unlikely*
Do not listen because you think his point of view is nonsense. *	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
Make clear you reject his point of view and neglect him during the rest of the evening. *	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
Listen to him, ask questions and try to understand why he takes this point of view.	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
Listen to him and express your own point of view afterwards.	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*

*Note. The items are translated from the Dutch. * Items are negatively formulated. The scenario and items marked in boldface belong to the final scale used to measure non-condemning intentions*

CHAPTER 6
GENERAL DISCUSSION

Due to immigration, the Islam has been a fast-growing religion in Western European societies, including the Netherlands. Because some of the norms, values and beliefs of the Islam are seen as incompatible with the Western European way of life, the Islam is often perceived as a threat to Western European culture (e.g., Croucher, 2013; González, Verkuyten, Weesie & Poppe, 2008). In line with the findings from previous research (e.g., González et al., 2008; Riek, Mania & Gaertner, 2006; Stephan, Renfro, Esses, Stephan & Martin, 2005; Stephan, Ybarra, Martinez, Schwarzwald & Tur-Kaspa, 1998), this perceived threat may result in negative attitudes of non-Muslims towards Muslims in society, with negative effects that are associated with this. Therefore, a relevant question is how to improve relations between Muslims and non-Muslims or, more generally, how to strengthen *bridging social capital* (Putnam, 2007) within contemporary Western European societies that are becoming increasingly culturally and religiously diverse. The central question of this dissertation is whether virtues could offer a positive contribution to bridging social capital. All studies described focused on the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims (mainly Christian and secular people) in the Netherlands.

The first step to investigate the potential of virtues as an instrument to improve the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in contemporary Dutch society was to find out whether virtues play a significant role in the daily lives of Dutch citizens, and, if so, which ones (Chapter 2). The second step was to examine the interpretations of these virtues among Dutch citizens with different religious and secular backgrounds, including Muslims (Chapter 3). A specific focus of the study described in Chapter 3 was to identify those virtues that are interpreted in a way that refers to doing what is right in relation to others, including outgroup members. To obtain a detailed insight, a qualitative approach was used. The third step was to investigate whether Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch agree on the virtues they pursue (Chapter 4, part 1). Virtues that are strongly pursued among both groups may be particularly useful in improving their mutual relations. Furthermore, the relations between pursuing certain virtues and the degree of acceptance of Muslims to participate in Dutch society while keeping their own cultural and religious identity, referred to as *attitudes of acceptance*, were investigated among non-Muslims (Chapter 4, part 2). Finally, it was examined to what extent Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch agree on their interpretations of the virtues that were found to be relevant to Dutch citizens (Chapter 5, part 1). In particular those virtues that both groups interpret as referring to doing what is right in relation to others, including outgroup members, are expected to be helpful to positively influence their relationships to one another. In addition, among non-Muslims, the relations between pursuing certain virtues, the interpretations of these virtues, and intentions to act in a non-condemning and understanding way towards others with different viewpoints were explored, including both outgroup (Muslims) and non-outgroup members (Chapter 5, part 2).

Below, the main findings of these studies will be summarized and will be

connected to existing literature on virtues and intergroup relations. The implications of these findings will be discussed with regard to the potential of virtues to positively contribute to the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in the Netherlands. We conclude with a discussion of the practical implications of the findings for the use of virtues as instruments to strengthen bridging social capital within the Netherlands, as well as other culturally and religiously diverse Western European societies.

Summary of main findings

Which virtues are relevant to people in contemporary Dutch society?

In order to find out which virtues are relevant to the daily lives of Dutch citizens, two groups of respondents representing people with a moral task in society, including school teachers and municipal council members, were asked which virtues and personal characteristics they propagate (Chapter 2). Besides, a group of Dutch secondary school pupils were asked which personal characteristics they regarded as important and tried to express in their daily lives, in order to gather information about the virtues that are relevant to a group of a younger generation without an explicit moral task. Among these three groups of respondents, different religious backgrounds (mainly Christians (Catholics and Protestants), Muslims and secularists) were represented. The respondents' answers resulted in a list of 80 different virtues. In line with previous studies on moral principles relevant to lay persons (e.g., Smith, Smith & Christopher, 2007; Walker & Pitts, 1998), virtues that were frequently mentioned explicitly refer to doing what is right in relation to others, such as *respect*, *kindness*, and *helpfulness*.

Analyses of the semantic categorization of the 80 virtues resulted in 16 overarching virtue types, which are *respect, honesty, joy, self-sufficiency, self-confidence, openness, responsibility, love, decency, wisdom, hope, self-control, patience, obedience, courage,* and *trust* (ordered according to their reported frequencies). The label of each type is the most frequently reported virtue within the specific category of virtues to which the type refers. These 16 virtue types were mentioned by all religious (Catholics, Protestants and Muslims) and secular respondent groups, except for *trust*, which was not mentioned by the Islamic respondents. Nevertheless, we decided to include *trust* as a virtue type in further studies, because this may be a particularly useful virtue to strengthen bridging social capital. According to Putnam (2007), *trust* is a key aspect of social capital, as he defines social capital as "social networks and the associated norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness" (p. 137). Of the 16 virtue types, *respect* was by far the most frequently mentioned virtue among all four religious and secular groups, followed by *honesty, self-suffi-*

ciency, joy, openness, and *self-confidence*.

An interesting question is how these 16 empirically discovered virtue types relate to the virtues that are central in religious and philosophical writings. Dahlsgaard, Peterson and Seligman (2005) analyzed the central writings of eight religious and philosophical traditions around the world (Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Athenian philosophy, Judaism, Christianity and Islam) with respect to the answers each provided to questions of moral behavior and the good life. They came up with six core virtues emerging from these writings, namely 'courage', 'wisdom', 'temperance', 'justice', 'humanity', and 'transcendence'. Among the 16 virtue types found in the present study, the core virtues 'courage' and 'wisdom' occur literally. The core virtues 'temperance' and 'justice' overlap with virtue types found in the present study, respectively *self-control* and *honesty*. Furthermore, the core virtue 'humanity' shows overlap with the virtue types *respect* and *love*, and the core virtue 'transcendence' overlaps with the virtue type *hope*. Of the 16 virtue types, *courage, wisdom, self-control, honesty, love, respect* and *hope* appear to be universal and timeless virtues.

Nine of the 16 virtue types do not occur in the central writings of the eight traditions (as analyzed by Dahlsgaard et al., 2005). These virtue types are *joy, self-sufficiency, self-confidence, openness, responsibility, decency, patience, obedience,* and *trust*. Apparently, these virtue types are modern phenomena that are not firmly rooted in tradition. There is some evidence that these virtues are not typical for contemporary Dutch society, but seem to be relevant to different cultures around the world. The results of a study in which lay people from Guam, Filipino, Palau, Taiwan, Turkey, the US, and Venezuela were asked to freely list all features of a good person showed that these virtue types appear to be relevant to at least one of the countries that were examined (Smith et al., 2007).

Virtue interpretations

A qualitative study was conducted in order to thoroughly examine the interpretations of the 16 virtue types among Dutch respondents, thereby inevitably limiting the size of the sample (Chapter 3). For this purpose, 23 Dutch adults with different religious and secular backgrounds, including Muslims, were interviewed. In these interviews, we only used the labels of the 16 virtue types instead of the whole category of virtues to which the type refers. Accordingly, in the following segment the term virtue is used instead of virtue type. With the interviews we aimed to identify how Dutch respondents describe the virtues, how they think these virtues can be expressed in behavior, and in what instances they consider it as important to display the virtues. We were specifically interested in the degree to which the 16 virtues were interpreted as referring to doing what is right in relation to others, including outgroup members. In addition, the relations between the way the

respondents interpreted the 16 virtues and their religious or secular backgrounds were explored.

Remarkably, of the 16 virtues found in our study, twelve were interpreted similarly by the respondents. Only the four virtues *respect, openness, love* and *trust* yielded several distinct interpretations. Notably, all 16 virtues could be interpreted in a way that prescribes behavior that is good for oneself as well as for others. Even the virtues *self-confidence* and *self-sufficiency* may indirectly promote behavior that is positive for both oneself and others. This finding supports the usefulness of virtues as instruments to strengthen social capital.

More is needed in order to strengthen bridging social capital, that is, the relations between people from different groups. Based on the interpretations of the virtues, eight groups of virtues with closely related meanings could be distinguished. Of these groups, we assume that the group of virtues that refer to being non-condemning and understanding towards others can offer a positive contribution to bridging social capital, as these virtues seem particularly important in the interaction with outgroup members with (perceived) different beliefs, values and preferences. The four virtues *respect, openness, love* and *trust* belong to this group. However, the degree to which these virtues refer to being non-condemning and understanding towards others appears to crucially depend on the way these virtues are interpreted. Equally, the degree to which these virtues appear to be useful to strengthen bridging social capital depends on the interpretation of these virtues. For *respect*, for example, its interpretation as unconditional respect refers to being non-condemning and understanding towards others. In contrast, the interpretation of *respect* as status respect refers to reckoning with status differences by being modest in relation to a person of higher status, and does not refer to being non-condemning and understanding.

Moreover, the group of virtues that refers to concern for others may offer a positive contribution to bridging social capital. Of the 16 virtues, *love*, interpreted as attention and compassion to others, belongs to this group. This interpretation promotes being considerate of others, which is crucial for social relations. A prerequisite for this interpretation to positively contribute to bridging social capital, however, is that it is applied not only to closely related others, such as partners, relatives and friends, but also to a broader group of people.

With respect to the relations between the interpretations of the 16 virtues and the religious or secular background of the respondents, we are specifically interested in possible differences between Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch. We found that status respect in the sense of respect for elderly people seems more relevant to Muslims compared to the other groups.

Pursuing virtues and bridging social capital

In order to assess the degree to which Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch pursue the same virtues, we asked members of these groups to grade each label of the 16 virtue types according to the degree to which they pursued to possess the virtue (Chapter 4). A factor analysis on these grades revealed three distinct virtue dimensions: A self-transcendent virtue dimension, which mainly consists of virtues referring to being concerned for others and to being optimistic, such as *respect, love* and *joy*; a rational virtue dimension, which mainly pertains to virtues referring to being sensible and self-supportive, such as *wisdom* and *self-confidence*; and a normative virtue dimension, which mainly pertains to virtues referring to controlling impulses and complying with valid norms and rules, such as *obedience* and *self-control*. The self-transcendent, rational and normative themes were found in other studies on virtues as well (Cawley, Martin & Johnson, 2000; De Raad & Van Oudenhoven, 2011; Shryack, Steger, Krueger & Kallie, 2010). The following question was to what extent Dutch citizens pursue the self-transcendent, rational and normative virtues, and whether there are substantial differences between Muslims and non-Muslims. The self-transcendent virtues appeared to be considered as most worth pursuing, and the normative virtues as least worth pursuing among both Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch. Muslims reported to pursue the three groups of virtues more than non-Muslims. This may indicate that virtues are positioned more centrally in the lives of Muslims and/or that Muslims have a stronger tendency for social desirability. The group of self-transcendent virtues may be useful in improving the relations between Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch, given its highest priority among all groups and its strong social character.

The usefulness of virtues in enhancing bridging social capital also depends on the relations between pursuing virtues and attitudes towards outgroup members that positively contribute to intergroup relations. These relations were explored among non-Muslim Dutch, while Muslims were considered as the outgroup members. We focused on attitudes of acceptance towards Muslims, defined as *accepting Muslims to participate in society while keeping their own cultural and religious identity*. We expected such an attitude to promote favorable relations between Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch, since the acceptance and recognition of different group identities is associated with positive outcomes for intergroup relations (Verkuyten, 2010; see also Sasaki & Vorauer, 2013, for a review). We also explored the possible role of perceived symbolic threat, because this seems to negatively affect the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in the Netherlands (González, et al., 2008; Van der Noll, Poppe & Verkuyten, 2010). Symbolic threat is defined as the perceived violation of ingroup beliefs, values, norms and morality due to the presence of an outgroup, which results in negative attitudes towards that specific outgroup (Riek, et al., 2006; Stephan & Stephan, 1996, 2000; Stephan, et al.,

1998). We found that pursuing self-transcendent virtues was positively related to attitudes of acceptance towards Muslims. This relation was mediated by perceived symbolic threat, which means that pursuing self-transcendent virtues was related to lower levels of perceived symbolic threat due to the presence of Muslims, and that lower levels of perceived symbolic threat were related to stronger attitudes of acceptance towards Muslims. As self-transcendent virtues may emphasize the connectedness of all people and an optimistic attitude to life, the negative relation between the pursuit of these virtues and perceived symbolic threat could be explained by the idea that pursuing these virtues deemphasizes intergroup differences in morality, values and beliefs, or perceiving these differences less as a threat.

In contrast to the possible positive role of self-transcendent virtues with regard to bridging social capital, we assume that normative virtues have a negative role. In our study, pursuing normative virtues appeared to be negatively related to attitudes of acceptance towards Muslims, by being related to increased levels of perceived symbolic threat due to their presence in society. People that strongly pursue these virtues may be more concerned about outgroup members threatening their norms, values and rules. Therefore, normative virtues are not suitable for attempting to strengthen bridging social capital.

Virtue interpretations and bridging social capital

In Chapter 5, we examined how Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch interpret the virtues *respect, openness, love* and *trust*, and to what extent these two groups differ in their interpretations. For each virtue, we found that the interpretation viewed as most characteristic was similar for Muslims and non-Muslims. The most characteristic interpretation for *respect* appeared to be the interpretation that referred to being non-condemning and understanding towards others. Because we assume that particularly the virtues with this interpretation can positively contribute to bridging social capital, *respect* seems a useful virtue. Concerning *openness*, both its interpretations as being open about oneself and being open to others were regarded as highly characteristic. As we consider that the latter interpretation refers solely, or in combination with the first interpretation, to being non-condemning and understanding towards others, *openness* is a potentially useful virtue to strengthen bridging social capital as well. Concerning *love*, its interpretation as attention and compassion to others was regarded as the most characteristic interpretation, where 'others' referred primarily to partners, relatives and friends. This makes *love* a less useful virtue to strengthen bridging social capital. Regarding *trust*, both its interpretations as interpersonal trust and an optimistic attitude to life were regarded as highly characteristic. *Trust* interpreted as interpersonal trust may offer a positive contribution to bridging social capital, as this interpretation refers to a positive

view of others and, in this way, to being non-condemning and understanding. Its interpretation as an optimistic attitude to life could offer a positive contribution as well, since it may emphasize the positive aspects of a culturally and religiously diverse society instead of its potential threats and drawbacks.

In addition, we explored the relations between the pursuit of the four virtues, the degree of agreement with the interpretations that refer to being non-condemning and understanding towards others, and actual intentions to act in a non-condemning and understanding way towards another person with a different viewpoint (referred to as non-condemning intentions), who was either an outgroup member or a non-outgroup member. We assumed that these intentions positively contribute to bridging social capital. For this part, we again focused on non-Muslim Dutch and considered Muslims as the outgroup members. With the scenarios we used to measure non-condemning intentions we measured non-condemning intentions towards an unfamiliar other. We found that the more non-Muslim Dutch agree with the interpretations of *respect, openness* and *love* that refer to being non-condemning and understanding towards others, including unfamiliar others (unconditional respect, being open towards others, and seeing the good side of others, respectively), the greater their actual non-condemning intentions are towards both an outgroup member (Muslim) and a non-outgroup member. No relations between the agreement with the other interpretations of these virtues and the non-condemning intentions were found. We found no relation between the agreement with the interpretation of *trust* as interpersonal trust and the non-condemning intentions. A possible explanation for this is that interpersonal trust has more to do with having positive expectations of the intentions of others than with the non-condemning and understanding intentions measured in the present study.

Unexpectedly, we did not find any effect of the degree to which non-Muslims pursue the virtues *respect, openness,* and *love* on their non-condemning intentions. This could be due to the way we measured the pursuit of virtues within this study. We asked respondents to rank the virtues from most to least pursued in their daily lives. This way, we obtained a score that reflects a relative instead of an absolute pursuit of virtues, whereas particularly the degree to which respondents pursue each of the virtues in absolute sense may predict their degree of non-condemning intentions. That we did find an effect of the agreement with specific virtue interpretations, regardless of the degree to which these virtues were pursued, can be explained by the fact that Dutch citizens generally regard *respect, openness* and *love* as worth pursuing (Chapter 4). Consequently, they will be motivated to express these virtues in behavior and the way they do this will probably be determined by the way they interpret these virtues.

Conclusions

Based on the findings described above, we conclude that virtues play a significant role in the lives of Dutch citizens. The ease with which they listed important personal characteristics that refer to virtues suggests that, although virtues have a long history in philosophy, the concept is still prevalent in contemporary society. Especially those virtues that explicitly refer to doing what is right in relation to others seem to be regarded as relevant, which supports the idea that virtues can positively contribute to social relations, including intergroup relations. Of the virtues found to be relevant, *respect* stands out: It was both frequently mentioned as an important virtue and ranked as a virtue worth pursuing among both Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch.

In order for virtues to be useful in improving relations between Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch, these virtues should not only be regarded as relevant among these groups, but they should also be interpreted in a way that can positively contribute to intergroup relations. Based on the way Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch interpret the 16 virtue types, *respect* seems to be a useful virtue. It appeared to be interpreted mostly as unconditional respect, which refers to being non-condemning and understanding towards others. We found that the more non-Muslim Dutch agree with this interpretation of *respect*, the greater their intentions to act in non-condemning and understanding ways towards others, including Muslims. We assume that such intentions positively contribute to intergroup relations. The idea that especially *respect*, interpreted as unconditional respect, is valuable for intergroup relations is in line with the findings from previous studies (Laham, Tam, Lalljee, Hewstone & Voci, 2010; Lalljee, Tam, Hewstone, Laham & Lee, 2009).

The virtues *openness* and *love*, too, can be interpreted in a way that encourages being non-condemning and understanding towards others, including outgroup members. However, for *openness* and *love* to promote being non-condemning and understanding, it seems important that the interpretations that refer to such an attitude are emphasized. Concerning *openness*, both its interpretations as being open about oneself and being open to others were regarded as highly applicable among both Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch, whereas especially the latter interpretation seem to result in more non-condemning and understanding intentions towards others. For *love*, the interpretation that motivates to being non-condemning and understanding was not regarded as the most characteristic interpretation of this virtue among Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch.

Not only virtues that refer to being non-condemning and understanding towards others may be useful in enhancing bridging social capital. Among non-Muslims, the pursuit of self-transcendent virtues appears to be related to more attitudes of acceptance towards Muslims, by being negatively related to perceived symbolic threat due to their presence in society. The self-transcendent virtues comprise virtues

that refer to being non-condemning and understanding towards others, to concern for others (*love* interpreted as compassion and attention to others), and to being optimistic (*trust, joy* and *hope*). The virtues that refer to being non-condemning and understanding towards others and to concern for others may emphasize the connectedness of all people and, in doing so, levels of perceived symbolic threat may be reduced. Pursuing the virtues that refer to an optimistic attitude may lower levels of perceived symbolic threat by emphasizing the positive aspects of a culturally and religiously diverse society.

Respect, in particular, seems a useful virtue in enhancing bridging social capital, followed by *openness, love, trust, joy,* and *hope*. For the use of these virtues in interventions, it seems important to pay attention to the way they are interpreted. This especially applies to *respect, love* and *openness*, because whether these virtues positively contribute to bridging social capital may depend on their interpretations. Moreover, with regard to *love*, the interpretations that may offer a positive contribution 'seeing the good side of others' and 'attention and compassion to all others' are not regarded as most characteristic across Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch.

It is also important to take into account that some virtues may not be useful, or may even negatively affect bridging social capital. This appears to be the case for the normative virtues, *obedience*, *decency*, *patience* and *self-control*. Therefore, no emphasis should be put on this group of virtues. Fortunately, based on the findings in the present study, these virtues are not regarded as most relevant to Dutch citizens, whether they are Muslim or non-Muslim.

Strengths and limitations

The idea that moral principles (virtues) may be a useful concept to strengthen bridging social capital is not new. The relation between moral principles and attitudes and behavior has been studied previously (e.g., Aquino & Reed, 2002; Hardy, 2006), including attitudes and behavior towards outgroup members (Reed & Aquino, 2003). Moreover, other studies investigated the relation between value priorities and intergroup attitudes and behavior (e.g., Sagiv & Schwartz, 1995; Saroglou, Lamkaddem, Van Pachterbeke & Buxant, 2009; Schiefer, Möllering, Daniel, Benish-Weisman, & Boehnke, 2010), where values were defined as desirable goals that serve as guiding principles in people's lives, which include virtues as well. We think that our approach is a valuable addition to previous work, as we thoroughly explored the potential contribution of virtues to bridging social capital within a culturally and religiously diverse society. To our opinion virtues are more applicable than values for strengthening bridging social capital, because in contrast to values, virtues always refer to morally good traits that can be acquired

and developed. This heightens the individual accountability and makes it easier for virtues to be put into practice by an individual, which makes virtues a more useful concept for interventions.

Strengths of the present study are that we used a bottom-approach in order to find out which virtues are regarded as relevant to people in contemporary Dutch society, and that we used a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches in order to explore the potential of these virtues to positively contribute to bridging social capital. In our view, a first prerequisite for virtues to offer a positive contribution to bridging social capital is that they are regarded as relevant by different groups in (Dutch) society. Therefore, we asked different groups which virtues they regarded as important. Next, we investigated the degree to which Dutch citizens, including Muslims and non-Muslims, pursued these virtues. Previous studies did compare the virtues mentioned by lay persons as important across different cultures (Smith et al., 2007) and within one culture (e.g., Walker & Pitts, 1998), but, as far as we know, only rarely compared the virtues mentioned by different groups within one culture. Furthermore, by asking citizens to indicate their interpretation of a virtue, a more detailed and vivid picture of the virtues was yielded and the variation in virtue interpretations was explored. Virtues are rather abstract concepts and the relation with actual behavior is not straightforward. Analyses of virtue interpretations revealed the potential relevance of the virtues for bridging social capital.

We also started to explore the actual relations between the pursuit of specific virtues, the interpretations of these virtues, and measures assumed to positively contribute to bridging social capital. In doing so, we obtained valuable results with regard to the potential of virtues to strengthen bridging social capital, showing that some virtues do seem particularly useful, whereas others do not. Nevertheless, more research is needed in order to investigate the relations between the pursuit of certain virtues and attitudes, intentions, and actual behavior towards outgroup members.

The studies described in this dissertation have several limitations. An important limitation is the restricted generalizability of our findings on the societal level. Except for the pupils participating in the first study who had to fill in a questionnaire during class, all respondents participated voluntarily. Some of them were approached via e-mail, online forums, on trains or on the streets. Their degree of interest in the topic and their general agreeableness probably played a role with regard to their willingness to participate, which resulted in a selection bias. This group of people may pursue strongly for particular virtues and/or, with respect to the non-Muslim participants, may hold more positive attitudes towards Muslims than people less willing to participate. Moreover, a good proficiency of the Dutch language was needed for answering the questions and participating in the interviews. As a consequence, the Muslims who participated in our studies are Muslims

who are well-integrated into Dutch society. This group may have internalized the Dutch virtues and virtue interpretations. Muslims less well integrated into Dutch society may differ regarding the virtues they pursue, as well as the way they interpret these virtues. Furthermore, most of the respondents who participated in our studies were higher educated. Previous research showed no to modest relations between educational level and the degree to which people regarded virtues as characteristic for themselves (Furnham & Lester, 2012; Ruch et al., 2010). The same may hold for the pursuit of virtues. However, some studies did show substantial relations between educational level, perceived intergroup threat, and attitudes towards outgroup members, where higher educated people tend to perceive lower levels of threat (e.g., Chapter 4; Savelkoul, Gesthuizen & Scheepers, 2011) and to hold more positive attitudes (e.g., Chapter 4; Breugelmans & Van de Vijver, 2004; Verkuyten, 2009). As a consequence, the relations that were found between pursuing virtues, virtue interpretations and attitudes of acceptance and non-condemning intentions towards outgroup members may differ for lower educated respondents.

Future research among a more heterogeneous sample is needed to strengthen our findings. This would require different research approaches than the ones used in the present study. First, in order to be able to explore virtue interpretations among lower educated respondents, a different style of interviewing is needed. In our qualitative study, we approached only higher educated respondents on purpose, because we assumed that a certain level of abstraction is needed in order to describe how one interprets a specific virtue. Second, with regard to the conducted questionnaire research, specific attention should be paid to including respondents with different levels of education. In order to reduce selection bias, respondents could receive a reward for participation. Another possibility is to use a more personal approach only when asking people to cooperate, which may heighten the chance that they will agree to cooperate. Concerning the Muslim respondents, an interpreter would be needed to include less well integrated Muslims into the study.

Another limitation is that, regarding the pursuit of virtues and virtue interpretations, Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch were compared to each other. Of course, the archetypical Muslim does not exist, neither does the archetypical non-Muslim. Within the Islam, as well as within Christianity and among secular groups, there are many different kinds of traditions and opinions. Therefore, there will be variation with regard to the pursuit of specific virtues as well as the way these virtues are interpreted within each group.

A third limitation of the present research is that the relation between pursuing virtues, virtue interpretations, and the measures assumed to positively contribute to bridging social capital is based on correlational studies, which makes it impossible to draw conclusions with regard to causal relations. As a consequence, it remains unknown whether promoting the pursuit of specific virtues would indeed result in

more positive attitudes and intentions towards outgroup members, or that positive attitudes and intentions would result in the pursuit of specific virtues. Moreover, the measures used as indicators of contributors to bridging capital were all self-report measures, which may have evoked socially desirable answers. No attention was paid to actual behavior. The measures were limited to attitudes and reactions to scenarios and not all appeared to be highly reliable. Therefore, we cannot yet be sure whether interventions in which specific virtues are promoted will actually lead to enhanced bridging social capital. In order to investigate this, an intervention should be developed, and its effectiveness should be tested in real settings in which actual behavior towards outgroup members can be observed.

Practical implications

On the basis of the results of the present study, we distinguish three valuable directions for the use of virtues in interventions directed at improving the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in contemporary Dutch society. First, virtues that refer to being non-condemning and understanding towards others, concern for others, and an optimistic attitude to life (i.e. self-transcendent virtues) seem to be particularly useful. Of these virtues, especially *respect* appears to be a highly applicable virtue. There seems to be no need to teach these virtues, since both Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch mentioned them as important virtues and regarded them as highly worth pursuing. Moreover, interventions in which these virtues are used will probably appeal to these groups, because they refer to something that is relevant to them. This may not solely apply to Muslims and non-Muslims in Dutch society. Previous studies showed that virtues that refer to doing what is right in relation to others are regarded as highly relevant across other cultures as well (Smith et al., 2007; Van Oudenhoven, De Raad, Carmona, Helbig & Van der Linden, 2012; Walker & Pitts, 1999). Moreover, the positive relations that were found between the pursuit of these virtues and attitudes that strengthen bridging social capital are in line with the findings in other research on moral principles, intentions and actual behavior towards outgroup members (Laham et al., 2010; Lalljee et al., 2009; Reed & Aquino, 2003).

Second, for the use of virtues in interventions directed at strengthening bridging social capital, it appears important to pay attention to the way the virtues are interpreted. Some virtues yielded various interpretations and their potentially positive contribution to bridging social capital may depend on their interpretation. Moreover, by paying attention to virtue interpretations, the meaning of the virtues for actual behavior in relation to others becomes clearer. *Respect*, for example, was described by a Dutch citizen as "*It is thinking about what urges another person to act in a certain way first, and not immediately giving your own opinion, or telling the*

other person what to do (…) That you do not immediately condemn other people's behavior", and *love* by another Dutch citizen as *"[love is] really having time for someone, listening to someone, and postponing your own business and issues for a while."*.

Third, besides encouraging specific virtues, another direction for interventions directed at improving the relations between Muslim and non-Muslim Dutch is to emphasize that the two groups share virtues. This may decrease perceived differences in values and morality between these groups and, as a consequence, reduce perceived symbolic threat by non-Muslims due to the presence of Muslims in society. Because perceived symbolic threat is related to less favorable attitudes towards outgroup members (e.g., Chapter 4; González et al., 2008; Riek, et al., 2006; Stephan, et al., 2005), reduced levels of perceived symbolic threat will result in more favorable attitudes towards outgroup members.

It is important to note that, since the samples used in this dissertation mainly consisted of highly educated respondents, it is questionable to what degree the proposed directions for interventions are applicable among groups with a lower level of education. We think that virtues can provide a worthwhile basis for interventions among these groups as well, but within these interventions it will be of particular importance to pay attention to the meaning of these virtues for actual behavior in relation to others, as virtues are rather abstract concepts.

The question that remains is how virtues can be promoted in interventions. Virtue based interventions directed at enhancing bridging social capital are mainly relevant within settings that face the challenges of cultural and religious diversity and where people interact with each other. Examples are schools, organizations, sports clubs, and the neighborhood. Within these settings, people can make arrangements with regard to which virtues they regard as important and how these virtues should be expressed in behavior. Based on the findings in the present study, people will come up with virtues that appear to be useful in strengthening bridging social capital. Moreover, they will probably agree on the virtues they regard as important. These arrangements about virtues may pave the way for intergroup discussions about relevant intergroup differences. Successful intergroup dialogues, which are intergroup dialogues that yield positive attitudes towards outgroup members and ongoing action, require respect for others and an understanding of their way of believing and thinking (Gurin-Sands, Gurin, Nagda & Osuna, 2012; Nagda, 2006; Wayne, 2008). Based on the current research, virtues as *respect*, *openness*, and maybe also *love*, can contribute to such an understanding attitude towards others.

Furthermore, because virtues provide guidelines with regard to how one ought to be and what one ought to do (Cawley, et al., 2000), and virtues can be acquired (Aristotle, 384-322 BC, cf. Pakaluk, 2005; Van Tongeren, 2003), individuals can be encouraged to develop specific virtues. A possible way is to reward virtuous

behavior in, for example, school classes. However, one has to take care that the virtues are internalized, because rewards may yield only extrinsically motivated virtuous behavior. Another possibility is to use examples of virtuous actions that are displayed by other persons. Previous research showed that witnessing or reading about virtuous behavior from another person motivates people to do good things themselves, both towards ingroup members (Algoe & Haidt, 2009), and outgroup members (Freeman, Aquino & McFerran, 2009).

DUTCH SUMMARY

(NEDERLANDSE SAMENVATTING)

Door immigratie en globalisering is de culturele en religieuze diversiteit in West-Europa de laatste decennia toegenomen. Als gevolg van een relatief groot aantal immigranten uit islamitische landen is vooral de islam een snel groeiende religie. Niet-moslims in West-Europa ervaren deze 'nieuwe' religie soms als bedreigend (e.g., Croucher, 2013; González, Verkuyten, Weesie & Poppe, 2008). Een van de redenen hiervoor is dat sommige normen, waarden en gebruiken van de islam worden gezien als onverenigbaar met de West-Europese manier van leven. De dreiging die niet-moslims ervaren als gevolg van de aanwezigheid van moslims heeft negatieve gevolgen voor de relaties tussen de leden van deze twee groepen. Daarom is het belangrijk na te gaan hoe deze relaties verbeterd kunnen worden. In dit proefschrift kijken we of deugden daar mogelijk positief aan kunnen bijdragen. We definiëren deugden als moreel goede, persoonlijke eigenschappen die kunnen worden aangeleerd. Moreel goed betekent dat de eigenschap een persoon aanzet tot gedrag dat bijdraagt aan een goed leven voor zichzelf en voor anderen.

We kiezen voor deugden als mogelijk instrument, omdat religie een belangrijke rol lijkt te spelen bij de waargenomen verschillen tussen moslims en niet-moslims in West-Europa. Het is daarom de moeite waard na te gaan of een concept dat gerelateerd is aan religie bruikbaar kan zijn om de relaties tussen beide groepen te verbeteren. Religie geeft mensen richtlijnen hoe een goed leven te leiden en een goed mens te zijn (e.g., Rossano, 2008; Vitell et al., 2009; Walker & Pitts, 1998). Met andere woorden, religie benadrukt deugden die nastrevenswaardig zijn. We denken dat deugden een mogelijk positieve bijdrage kunnen leveren aan het verbeteren van de relaties tussen verschillende groepen binnen een samenleving, zoals tussen moslims en niet-moslims, omdat deugden verwijzen naar positieve eigenschappen voor een persoon zelf en voor anderen. Op deze manier motiveren ze tot gedrag dat positief bijdraagt aan sociale relaties. Daarnaast zijn er aanwijzingen dat sommige deugden door verschillende culturele en religieuze groepen worden gedeeld (Dahlsgaard, et al., 2005; Park, Peterson & Seligman, 2006; Smith, Smith & Christopher, 2007; Van Oudenhoven, De Raad, Carmona, Helbig & Van der Linden, 2012). Dit blijken vooral deugden te zijn die expliciet verwijzen naar hoe zich goed te gedragen ten opzichte van anderen.

Willen deugden een bijdrage kunnen leveren aan het verbeteren van de relatie tussen moslims en niet-moslims in West-Europa, dan moet volgens ons aan een aantal voorwaarden worden voldaan. De eerste voorwaarde is dat de leden van beide groepen de deugden belangrijk vinden. In dit geval zullen zij gemotiveerd zijn om de deugden te laten zien in hun gedrag en het waarderen wanneer anderen deze deugden tonen. De tweede voorwaarde is dat de deugden inderdaad zo worden geïnterpreteerd dat ze aanzetten tot gedrag dat een positieve bijdrage levert aan intergroepsrelaties. De derde voorwaarde is dat de leden van de verschillende groepen het grotendeels eens zijn over deze interpretaties.

Dat de deugden daadwerkelijk motiveren tot houdingen en gedragingen die intergroepsrelaties kunnen verbeteren is de vierde voorwaarde. In dit proefschrift zijn deze voorwaarden onderzocht, waarbij we ons gericht hebben op moslims en niet-moslims in Nederland. Recent onderzoek in Nederland heeft aangetoond dat een groot deel van de bevolking zich zorgen maakt over de invloed van de islam en zich bedreigd voelt door de aanwezigheid van moslims (González et al, 2008; Lampert, 2013; Van der Noll, Poppe & Verkuyten, 2010). Nederland lijkt daarom een geschikte plek om na te gaan of deugden kunnen bijdragen aan het verbeteren van de relaties tussen moslims en niet-moslims.

Hieronder worden per hoofdstuk de belangrijkste bevindingen beschreven. Vervolgens bespreken we de conclusies die we hieruit kunnen trekken en de implicaties met betrekking tot de mogelijk positieve bijdrage van deugden aan het verbeteren van de relaties tussen moslims en niet-moslims in Nederland en misschien ook in andere West-Europese landen.

Hoofdstuk 2

In hoofdstuk 2 beschrijven wij de resultaten van het onderzoek naar de deugden die belangrijk zijn voor verschillende groepen in Nederland. Hiertoe hebben we leerkrachten, gemeenteraadsleden en middelbare scholieren met verschillende religieuze achtergronden (hoofdzakelijk christenen (protestanten en katholieken), moslims en niet-religieuzen) gevraagd welke deugden of persoonlijke eigenschappen zij belangrijk vonden. Vooral deugden die expliciet refereren aan goed gedrag ten opzichte van anderen, zoals *respect, vriendelijkheid* en *behulpzaamheid,* werden veel genoemd door de drie groepen respondenten. Categorisatie van de gevonden deugden resulteerde in 16 overkoepelende deugdencategorieën, namelijk (in volgorde van de frequentie waarin de deugden binnen deze categorieën zijn genoemd) *respect, eerlijkheid, vreugde, zelfredzaamheid, zelfvertrouwen, openheid, verantwoordelijkheid, liefde, fatsoen, wijsheid, hoop, zelfbeheersing, geduld, gehoorzaamheid, moed* en *vertrouwen*. De namen van de categorieën komen overeen met de deugden die het vaakst zijn genoemd binnen iedere categorie. De 16 deugden werden door alle verschillende religieuze en niet-religieuze groepen genoemd, met uitzondering van de deugd *vertrouwen*, die niet werd genoemd door de islamitische respondenten. *Respect* werd door alle groepen het vaakst genoemd, gevolgd door *eerlijkheid, zelfredzaamheid, vreugde, openheid* en *zelfvertrouwen*.

Hoofdstuk 3

In hoofdstuk 3 beschrijven we hoe de 16 deugden gevonden in hoofdstuk 2 werden geïnterpreteerd door een groep volwassenen met verschillende religieuze en niet-

religieuze achtergronden, waaronder moslims. Uit de interviews met deze volwassenen bleek dat de 16 deugden opvallend eenduidig werden geïnterpreteerd. Slechts bij vier deugden kwamen duidelijke verschillende interpretaties naar voren. Dat zijn de deugden *respect, openheid, liefde* en *vertrouwen*. Verder werd geen van de deugden omschreven als een eigenschap die enkel en alleen goed is voor een persoon zelf. Dit ondersteunt ons idee dat deugden een positieve bijdrage kunnen leveren aan sociale relaties.

Wat betreft het verbeteren van de relaties tussen leden van verschillende groepen lijken twee groepen deugden een positieve invloed te kunnen hebben. De eerste groep bestaat uit deugden die verwijzen naar onbevooroordeeld en begripvol zijn ten opzichte van anderen. Dit is belangrijk in het contact met leden van andere culturele en religieuze groepen met (waargenomen) andere opvattingen, normen, waarden en voorkeuren. De deugden *respect, openheid, liefde* en *vertrouwen* kunnen tot deze groep behoren, afhankelijk van hoe ze worden geïnterpreteerd. De tweede groep bestaat uit deugden die verwijzen naar 'begaan zijn met anderen'. *Liefde* kan op deze manier worden geïnterpreteerd. Een voorwaarde voor deze deugden om bij te kunnen dragen aan het verbeteren van intergroepsrelaties is dat ze niet alleen worden getoond richting partner, familie en vrienden, maar ook richting mensen buiten iemands nabije sociale omgeving.

Hoofdstuk 4

Hoofdstuk 4 laat zien dat moslims en niet-moslims het grotendeels eens zijn over welke van de 16 deugden zij het meest nastreven. Beide groepen beschouwen de deugden die verwijzen naar onbevooroordeeld en begripvol zijn ten opzichte van anderen, begaan zijn met anderen, en een optimistische houding (de zogenaamde 'zelfoverstijgende deugden', zoals *respect* en *vreugde*) als meest nastrevenswaardig. Deugden die verwijzen naar het onderdrukken van impulsen en zich aanpassen aan geldende normen en regels (de zogenaamde 'normatieve deugden' zoals *zelfbeheersing* en *fatsoen*) worden door beide groepen het minst nagestreefd. Moslims lijken in het algemeen sterker naar deugden te streven dan niet-moslims.

Onder niet-moslims vinden we verder dat de mate waarin zij streven naar zelfoverstijgende deugden negatief samenhangt met de mate waarin zij zich bedreigd voelen met betrekking tot hun normen, waarden en opvattingen door de aanwezigheid van moslims (symbolische dreiging, zoals gedefinieerd door Stephan & Stephan, 1996, 2000; Stephan, Ybarra, Martinez, Schwarzwald & Tur-Kaspa, 1998). Het minder ervaren van symbolische dreiging hangt samen met een sterkere acceptatie van de participatie van moslims binnen de Nederlandse samenleving met behoud van hun eigen religieuze en culturele identiteit. Daartegenover blijkt dat de mate waarin niet-moslims normatieve deugden nastreven

gerelateerd is aan het meer ervaren van symbolische dreiging door de aanwezigheid van moslims. Dat laatste hangt samen met een geringere acceptatie van de participatie van moslims binnen de Nederlandse samenleving met behoud van hun eigen religieuze en culturele identiteit. Dit betekent dat de zelfoverstijgende deugden wellicht een positieve bijdrage kunnen leveren aan het verbeteren van de relatie tussen moslims en niet-moslims in Nederland. Wat betreft de normatieve deugden lijkt er juist eerder sprake van een negatieve bijdrage.

Hoofdstuk 5

In hoofdstuk 5 wordt duidelijk dat moslims en niet-moslims het eens zijn over welke interpretatie ze het meest karakteristiek vinden voor de deugden *respect, openheid, liefde* en *vertrouwen*. Vooral *respect* blijkt op een manier te worden geïnterpreteerd die een positieve bijdrage kan leveren aan het verbeteren van intergroepsrelaties, namelijk als begripvol en onbevooroordeeld zijn tegenover anderen. Dit geldt, zij het in mindere mate, ook voor *openheid*. *Openheid* wordt door beide groepen zowel geïnterpreteerd als open zijn over zichzelf als open zijn naar anderen. De laatstgenoemde interpretatie afzonderlijk, maar ook in combinatie met de eerste, verwijst naar begripvol en onbevooroordeeld zijn ten opzichte van anderen. *Liefde* wordt vooral geïnterpreteerd als begaan zijn met anderen. Deze interpretatie kan een positieve bijdrage leveren aan intergroepsrelaties. Echter, omdat met anderen vooral partner, familie en vrienden worden bedoeld, lijkt de mogelijke bijdrage van *liefde* aan het verbeteren van intergroepsrelaties beperkt. *Vertrouwen* wordt zowel geïnterpreteerd als een optimistische levenshouding als interpersoonlijk vertrouwen. De eerste interpretatie kan een positieve bijdrage leveren aan het verbeteren van intergroepsrelaties, omdat het de positieve kanten van een cultureel en religieus diverse samenleving kan benadrukken, in plaats van de mogelijke dreigingen en nadelen. De tweede interpretatie verwijst naar een positief beeld van anderen, en, op die manier, naar een begripvolle en onbevooroordeelde houding.

Daarnaast vinden we onder niet-moslims dat hoe meer zij het eens zijn met de interpretaties van *respect, openheid* en *liefde* die verwijzen naar begripvol en onbevooroordeeld zijn ten opzichte van anderen, inclusief onbekende anderen, hoe sterker hun intenties om daadwerkelijk begripvol en onbevooroordeeld te zijn ten opzichte van anderen, inclusief moslims.

Conclusies

Vooral deugden die expliciet verwijzen naar goed gedrag ten opzichte van anderen worden belangrijk gevonden door zowel moslims als niet-moslims in Nederland. Dit ondersteunt ons idee dat deugden een positieve bijdrage kunnen

leveren aan het verbeteren van de relatie tussen deze twee groepen. Vooral *respect* blijkt een zeer belangrijke deugd: zij wordt veelvuldig genoemd en sterk nagestreefd.

Willen deugden een positieve bijdrage leveren aan het verbeteren van de relatie tussen moslims en niet-moslims, dan moeten ze niet alleen belangrijk zijn voor de leden van beide groepen, maar ook zo worden geïnterpreteerd dat ze motiveren tot gedrag dat die bijdrage levert. Op basis van de bevindingen in dit proefschrift blijkt *respect* een bruikbare deugd. Zowel moslims als niet-moslims interpreteren deze deugd het meest als onbevooroordeeld en begripvol zijn ten opzichte van anderen. Hoe meer niet-moslims het eens zijn met deze interpretatie, hoe sterker hun intenties om daadwerkelijk onbevooroordeeld en begripvol te zijn tegenover anderen, inclusief moslims. Ook *openheid* en *liefde* kunnen op een manier worden geïnterpreteerd die, onder niet-moslims, positief samenhangt met onbevooroordeelde en begripvolle intenties ten opzichte van anderen, inclusief moslims. Wat betreft *liefde* wordt deze interpretatie noch door moslims, noch door niet-moslims als meest karakteristiek gezien. *Openheid* wordt zowel geïnterpreteerd als onbevooroordeeld en begripvol zijn naar anderen als open zijn over jezelf. Deze laatste interpretatie van openheid hangt niet samen met onbevooroordeelde en begripvolle intenties ten opzichte van anderen.

Niet alleen deugden die verwijzen naar onbevooroordeeld en begripvol zijn ten opzichte van anderen lijken bruikbaar voor het verbeteren van intergroepsrelaties. Onder niet-moslims blijkt dat hoe mee zij zelfoverstijgende deugden nastreven hoe minder symbolische dreiging ze ervaren door de aanwezigheid van moslims. Dit laatste hangt weer samen met grotere acceptatie van participatie van moslims binnen de Nederlandse samenleving met behoud van hun eigen culturele en religieuze identiteit. De deugden die kunnen verwijzen naar onbevooroordeeld en begripvol zijn ten opzichte van anderen, begaan zijn met anderen (*liefde* geïnterpreteerd als aandacht en compassie voor anderen) en optimisme (*vertrouwen, hoop* en *vreugde*) behoren tot de groep zelfoverstijgende deugden. Deugden die verwijzen naar onbevooroordeeld en begripvol zijn ten opzichte van anderen en begaan zijn met anderen kunnen de gemeenschappelijkheid van alle mensen benadrukken en, op deze manier, de ervaren symbolische dreiging doen afnemen. Deugden die verwijzen naar een optimistische houding kunnen leiden tot het ervaren van minder symbolische dreiging doordat ze motiveren tot het benadrukken van de positieve kanten van culturele en religieuze diversiteit.

We concluderen dat vooral *respect* een bruikbare deugd blijkt voor het verbeteren van de relaties tussen moslims en niet-moslims, gevolgd door *openheid, liefde, vertrouwen, vreugde* en *hoop*. Het lijkt belangrijk aandacht te besteden aan de interpretaties van de deugden. Dit geldt vooral voor *respect, openheid* en *liefde*, omdat deze deugden op verschillende manieren worden geïnterpreteerd en deze interpretaties lijken te variëren in de mate waarin ze een positieve bijdrage

kunnen leveren aan het verbeteren van intergroepsrelaties. Verder is het belangrijk te constateren dat niet alle deugden een positieve bijdrage kunnen leveren. Het streven naar de normatieve deugden, *gehoorzaamheid, fatsoen, geduld* en *zelfbeheersing*, lijkt zelfs negatieve gevolgen te hebben voor intergroepsrelaties. Mensen die deze deugden sterk nastreven vinden het aanpassen aan geldende normen waarschijnlijk belangrijk en voelen zich hierdoor misschien meer bedreigd door de aanwezigheid van moslims met (waargenomen) andere normen. Gelukkig worden deze deugden niet als meest nastrevenswaardig gezien door moslims, noch door niet-moslims.

Een zeer belangrijke vraag is in hoeverre de resultaten van het beschreven onderzoek gegeneraliseerd kunnen worden naar de gehele Nederlandse samenleving. De deelnemers aan het onderzoek deden mee op vrijwillige basis, wat kan resulteren in een selectie bias (d.w.z. de deelnemers behoren tot een groep die bereid is medewerking te verlenen en/of geïnteresseerd is in het onderwerp van dit proefschrift). Verder hebben alleen moslims met een goede beheersing van de Nederlandse taal mee gedaan aan dit onderzoek. Dit betreft een groep moslims die goed geïntegreerd is in de Nederlandse samenleving. Tussen niet-moslims en moslims die minder goed geïntegreerd zijn kunnen grotere verschillen bestaan wat betreft de deugden die als belangrijk en nastrevenswaardig worden beschouwd en ook wat betreft de interpretaties van deugden. Een ander belangrijk punt is dat grotendeels hoger opgeleiden mee hebben gedaan aan dit onderzoek. Eerder onderzoek heeft aangetoond dat opleidingsniveau positief samenhangt met een positievere houding ten opzichte van leden van andere culturele en religieuze groepen. Onderzoek onder een meer heterogene groep wat betreft opleidingsniveau en, voor wat betreft moslims, de mate van integratie in de Nederlandse samenleving is nodig om na te gaan in hoeverre bovenstaande conclusies gelden voor de gehele Nederlandse samenleving.

Naast de beperkingen van dit onderzoek met betrekking tot de mogelijke generaliseerbaarheid, is het goed te noemen dat noch 'de moslim' bestaat, noch de 'niet-moslim'. Binnen deze groepen zijn verschillende subgroepen te onderscheiden waartussen wellicht verschillen bestaan in de deugden die als belangrijk en nastrevenswaardig worden gezien.

Implicaties voor de praktijk

Ondanks de genoemde beperkingen kunnen we op basis van de bevindingen in dit proefschrift drie belangrijke aandachtspunten onderscheiden voor de manier waarop deugden gebruikt kunnen worden voor het verbeteren van de relatie tussen moslims en niet-moslims in Nederland. Aangezien deugden geleerd en geoefend kunnen worden, lijken zij een bruikbaar concept voor interventies gericht op het verbeteren van intergroepsrelaties. Deze interventies kunnen worden uitgevoerd

binnen groepen die te maken hebben met de uitdagingen van culturele en religieuze diversiteit, zoals op scholen, binnen organisaties en in buurten. Het eerste aandachtspunt voor interventies binnen deze groepen is het onder de aandacht brengen van de deugden die verwijzen naar begripvol en onbevooroordeeld zijn ten opzichte van anderen, begaan zijn met anderen en een optimistische levenshouding. Het streven naar deze deugden hangt samen met een houding die een positieve bijdrage kan leveren aan intergroepsrelaties. Op basis van de bevindingen in dit onderzoek lijkt het niet nodig deze deugden op te leggen: wanneer moslims en niet-moslims gevraagd wordt wat zij belangrijke deugden (goede persoonlijke eigenschappen) vinden, zullen ze zelf met deze deugden komen. Daarbij zullen interventies waarin deze deugden worden gebruikt aanspreken, omdat ze als zeer nastrevenswaardig worden beschouwd door leden van beide groepen

Ten tweede dient aandacht besteed te worden aan de interpretatie van deugden. Een aantal deugden kan op verschillende manieren worden geïnterpreteerd en hun mogelijke bijdrage aan het verbeteren van intergroepsrelaties lijkt af te hangen van die interpretatie. Daarbij zijn deugden vrij abstracte concepten. Door aandacht te besteden aan de interpretaties ervan wordt duidelijker wat de deugden betekenen voor concreet gedrag ten opzichte van anderen.

Het derde aandachtspunt is het benadrukken van het feit dat moslims en niet-moslims het voor een groot deel eens zijn over de deugden die zij belangrijk en nastrevenswaardig vinden. Dit kan helpen om de ervaren dreiging door de aanwezigheid van moslims onder niet-moslims binnen de Nederlandse samenleving te reduceren, omdat het de waargenomen verschillen tussen moslims en niet-moslims wat betreft belangrijke waarden en morele principes kan doen afnemen. Als er minder dreiging wordt ervaren zal dit bijdragen aan een positievere houding van niet-moslims ten opzichte van de aanwezigheid van moslims in Nederland.

Aangezien ons onderzoek heeft plaatsgevonden onder hoofdzakelijk hoger opgeleiden is het de vraag in hoeverre de genoemde richtingen voor interventies ook bruikbaar zijn voor groepen met een lager opleidingsniveau. Naar ons idee kunnen ook dan deugden een basis vormen voor interventies; in dat geval zou niet zozeer aandacht moeten worden besteed aan de deugden op zich, maar vooral aan de uiting van deze deugden in concreet gedrag.

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